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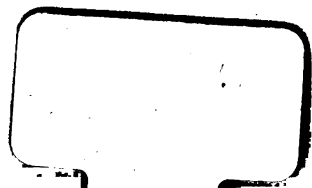
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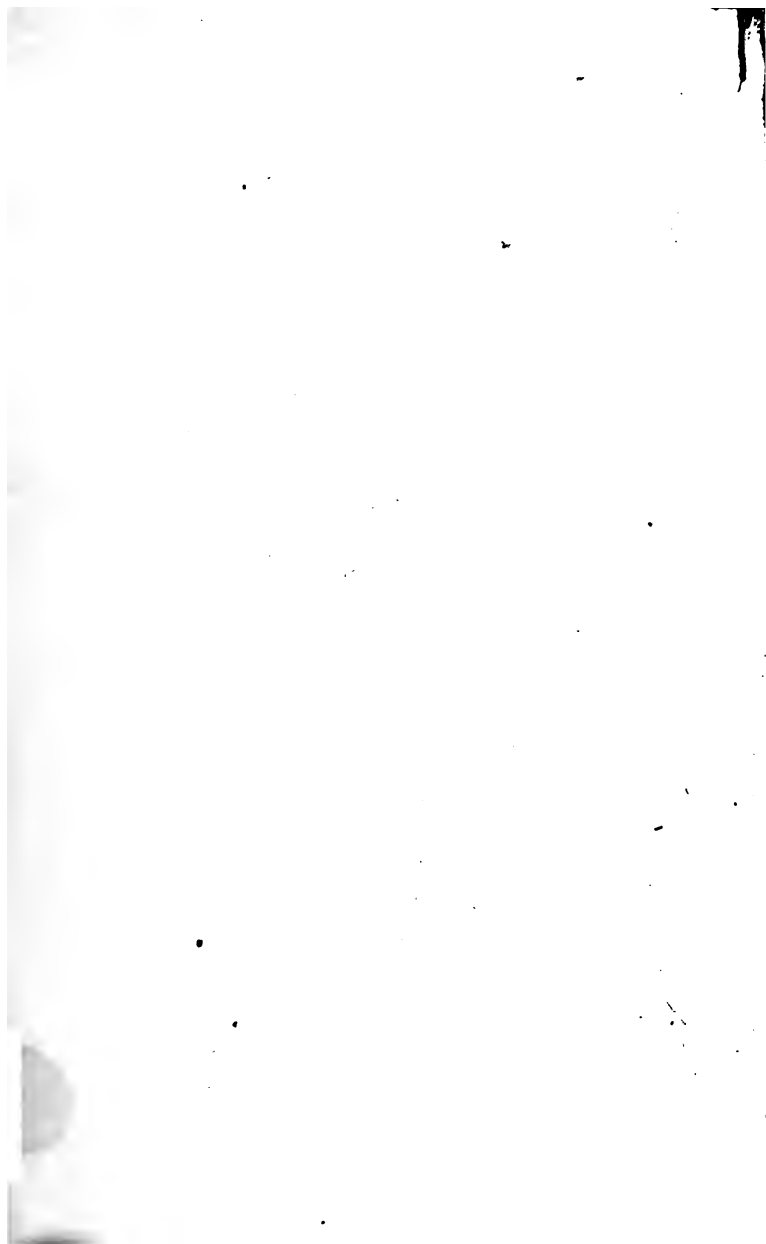


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LECTURES

ON

RHETORIC AND BELLES LETTRES;

CHIEFLY FROM THE

LECTURES OF DR. BLAIR.

BY ABRAHAM MILLS, A. M.

AUTHOR OF AN IMPROVED EDITION OF ALISON ON TASTE, ETC.

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TO THE
REV. JAMES M. MATHEWS, D. D.

CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK,

THIS HUMBLE VOLUME

IS

INSCRIBED,

AS A TESTIMONY OF THE RESPECT AND ADMIRATION

OF

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

DR. BLAIR'S Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres are in the hands of every one pretending to taste and polite learning; and to argue in favor of their merits, would be like attempting to persuade the lovers of poetry, that they ought to admire the *Deserted Village* of Goldsmith, or the *Pleasures of Hope* of Campbell.

The author of the present volume has, therefore, adhered to the original text as closely as possible; and in every case, where the design of the work rendered it necessary to deviate from it, he has uniformly endeavored to identify the alterations and additions with Dr. Blair's own style and manner of writing, that no discrepancy might be perceived. It was not the author's ambition to attempt anything original; but to offer to Professors and Teachers of this delightful science, a text book, which, from its convenience and appropriateness, might meet their approbation.

Though the practice of using questions in books of instruction, is still objected to by some well informed persons connected with the business of education, yet it is apprehended that this objection rests rather on the very defective manner in which questions are generally prepared, than on the questions themselves: for, surely, as the object of committing the text without them, is, that the whole body of the work may be learned, so, if the questions be properly constructed, they must necessarily include the literal whole of the author. That the student, therefore, may enjoy every possible facility while studying this work, the author has endeavored to draw his questions from the work itself; involving in them, and the answers which they require, all that the text contains. Some, however, may still object to

PREFACE.

questions, however carefully they may be formed. To such the author would only observe, that as these are appended to the work, and not incorporated in it, they may, without any inconvenience to the teacher, be omitted altogether.

With regard to the analyses affixed to the lectures, it must be remembered that they are intended to be used in the form of review—that after the student shall have learned the text of a lecture thoroughly, he should then be directed to commit the analysis perfectly to memory, and, by it, recapitulate the subject as one whole.

It was remarked to the author, when he commenced this work, that a different arrangement of the lectures would be a judicious improvement. But, upon reflection, he thought it most advisable to follow the order of the original. Should others, however, think differently, they may pursue the course that first suggested itself—to commence the work with the lecture on the Rise and Progress of Language, and introduce the II., III., IV., and V. lectures immediately after the Criticisms on Mr. Addison's Style, in the Spectator.

New York, November, 1832.

LECTURE I.

INTRODUCTION.

ONE of the most distinguished privileges that Providence has conferred upon mankind, is the power of communicating their thoughts to one another. Without this power, reason would be a solitary, and, in some measure, an unavailable principle. Speech is the great instrument by which man becomes beneficial to man; and it is to the intercourse and transmission of thought, by means of speech, that we are chiefly indebted for the improvement of thought itself. Small are the advances which a single unassisted individual can make towards perfecting any of his powers. What we call human reason, is not the effort or ability of one, so much as it is the result of the reason of many, arising from lights mutually communicated, in consequence of discourse and writing.

It is obvious then, that writing and discourse are objects entitled to the highest attention. Whether the influence of the speaker, or the entertainment of the hearer, be consulted—whether utility or pleasure be the principal aim in view; we are prompted by the strongest motives, to study how we may communicate our thoughts to the best advantage. In the language, even of the rudest and most uncultivated tribes of men, we can trace some attention to the grace and force of those expressions which they used, when they sought to persuade or to effect; and among nations in a civilized state, no art has been cultivated with more care, than that of language, style, and composition. The attention paid to it, may, indeed, be assumed as one mark of the progress of society towards its most improved period; for, according as society improves and flourishes, men, by means of reasoning and discourse, acquire more influence over one another.

What is one of the most distinguished privileges that Providence has conferred upon mankind? Without this power, what would reason be? Of speech, what is remarked; and what follows? What is what we call human reason; and from what does it arise? Of writing and discourse then, what is obvious; and why? In the language of the rudest and most uncultivated tribes of men, what can we trace; and of nations in a civilized state, what is observed? As what, may the attention paid to it, be assumed; and why?

The study of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres, not only supposes, but requires a proper acquaintance with the rest of the liberal arts. As it embraces them all within its circle, and recommends them to the highest regard, the first care of such as wish, either to write with reputation, or to speak in public, so as to command attention, must be to extend their knowledge—to lay in a rich store of ideas relating to those subjects, on which the occasions of life may call them to discourse or to write. Hence, among the ancients, it was a fundamental principle, and frequently inculcated, that the orator ought to be an accomplished scholar, and conversant in every part of learning. It is, indeed, impossible to contrive an art, and very pernicious it were, if it could be contrived, which should give the stamp of merit to any composition, rich or splendid in expression, but barren or erroneous in thought. They are the wretched attempts towards an art of this kind, which have so often disgraced oratory, and debased it below its true value. The graces of composition have been employed to disguise or to supply the want of matter; and the temporary applause of the ignorant has been courted, instead of the lasting approbation of the discerning. But such imposture can never maintain its ground long: knowledge and science must furnish the materials that form the body and substance of any valuable composition. Rhetoric serves to add the polish; and we know that none but firm and solid bodies can be polished well.

To speak or to write with perspicuity and purity, with grace and strength, are attainments of the utmost consequence to all who purpose, either by speech or writing, to address the public; for, without being master of these attainments, no man can do justice to his own conceptions. And so far are they from being of that kind, for which we are indebted to nature alone, that among the learned, it has long been a contested, and, indeed, still remains an undecided question,

With what does the study of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres require a proper acquaintance? As it embraces them all within its circle, and recommends them to the highest regard, what should be the first care of such as wish, either to write with reputation, or to speak in public, so as to command attention? Hence, what was, among the ancients, a fundamental principle, and frequently inculcated? An art of what sort, if it were possible to contrive such an one, would be very pernicious? Of the wretched attempts towards an art of this kind, what is observed; for what have the graces of composition been employed; and what follows? But why cannot such imposture maintain its ground long? What are attainments of the utmost consequence; to whom, and why? What, among the learned, has long been a contested, and still remains an undecided question?

whether nature or art contributes most towards excellence in them.

With respect to the manner in which art can most effectually furnish assistance for such a purpose, there may be diversity of opinions; and it would be presumption to say, that mere rhetorical rules, how just soever, are sufficient to form an orator. Private application and study, supposing natural genius to be favorable, are certainly superior to any system of public instruction. But though rules and instructions cannot comprehend every thing which is requisite, they may afford considerable advantage. They cannot, it is true, inspire genius; but they can direct and assist it. They cannot render barrenness fruitful; but they may correct redundancy. They point out the proper models for imitation; they bring into view the chief beauties that ought to be studied, and the principal faults that ought to be avoided; and thereby tend to enlighten taste, and to lead genius from unnatural deviations into its proper channel. Though they are incapable, perhaps, of producing great excellencies, they may, at least, be subservient to prevent the commission of considerable mistakes.

All that regards the study of eloquence and composition, merits the higher attention, upon this account, that it is intimately connected with the improvement of our intellectual powers. For it must be allowed, that when we are employed, after a proper manner, in the study of composition, we are cultivating reason itself. True rhetoric, and sound logic, are very nearly allied. The study of arranging and expressing our thoughts with propriety, teaches us to think as well as to speak accurately; for by putting our sentiments into words, we always conceive them more distinctly. Every one who has the slightest acquaintance with composition, knows that the defects of his style, can almost always be traced back to an indistinct conception of his subject.

As rhetoric has been sometimes thought to signify nothing

About what, may there be diversity of opinions; and to say what, would be presumption? What are superior to any system of public instruction? What cannot rules and instructions effect; yet what can they do? Though they are incapable of producing great excellencies, yet what may they prevent? Why does all that regards the study of eloquence and composition, merit attention? What must be allowed to be its effect? What are very nearly allied? What effect does the study of arranging and expressing our thoughts properly produce; and why? What does every one, who has the slightest acquaintance with composition, know? What has rhetoric, sometimes, been thought to signify; and how has criticism been considered?

more than the scholastic study of words, and phrases, and tropes ; so criticism has been considered as merely the art of finding faults—as the frigid application of certain technical terms, by means of which, persons are taught to cavil and censure in a learned manner. But this is the criticism of pedants only. True criticism is a liberal and humane art. It is the offspring of good sense and refined taste. It aims at acquiring a just discernment of the real merits of authors. It promotes a lively relish of their beauties, while it preserves us from that blind and implicit veneration which would confound their beauties and faults in our esteem.

In an age when works of genius are so frequently the subjects of discourse, when every one erects himself into a judge, and when we can hardly mingle in polite society without bearing some share in such discussions ; studies of this kind, it is not to be doubted, will appear to derive part of their importance from the use to which they may be applied in furnishing materials for those fashionable topics of discourse, and thereby enabling us to support a proper rank in social life. But it would be much to be regretted, if we could not rest the merit of such studies on somewhat of solid and intrinsic use, independent of appearance and show. The exercise of taste and of sound criticism is, in truth, one of the most improving employments of the understanding. To apply the principles of good sense to composition and discourse ; to examine what is beautiful, and why it is so ; to employ ourselves in distinguishing accurately between the specious and the solid, between affected and natural ornament, must certainly improve us not a little in the most valuable part of all philosophy—the philosophy of human nature. For such disquisitions are very intimately connected with the knowledge of ourselves. They reasonably lead us to reflect on the operations of the imagination, and the movements of the heart ; and increase our acquaintance with some of the most refined feelings which belong to our frame.

Of whom is this the criticism ? What is true criticism ; and at what does it aim ? What does it promote ; and from what preserve us ? In an age like the present, from what will studies of this kind appear to derive part of their importance ; but what would be, at the same time, much to be regretted ? Of the exercise of taste, and of sound criticism, what is observed ; and what must certainly improve us in the philosophy of human nature ? With what are such disquisitions very intimately connected ; to reflect on what, do they necessarily lead us ; and with what do they increase our acquaintance ?

To Belles Lettres belongs, also, all that relates to beauty, harmony, grandeur, and elegance ; all that can soothe the mind, gratify the fancy, or move the affections. They also exercise the mind without fatiguing it ; leading to inquiries acute but not painful ; profound, but not dry nor abstruse. The pleasures of taste occupy a middle station between the pleasures of sense and those of pure intellect. To be entirely devoid of relish for eloquence, poetry, or any of the fine arts, is justly considered an unpromising symptom in youth ; and raises suspicions of their being prone to low gratifications, or destined to drudge in the more vulgar and illiberal pursuits of life. A cultivated taste increases sensibility to all the tender and humane passions, by giving them frequent exercise ; while it tends to weaken the more violent and fierce emotions.

These polished arts have humanized mankind,
Softened the rude, and calm'd the boisterous mind.

The elevated sentiments and high examples which poetry, eloquence, and history, are often bringing under our view, naturally tend to nourish, in our minds, public spirit, the love of glory, contempt of external fortune, and the admiration of what is truly illustrious and great. From reading the most admired productions of genius, whether in poetry or prose, almost every one rises with some good impressions left upon his mind ; and though these may not always be durable, they are, at least, to be ranked among the means of disposing the heart to virtue. One thing is certain, that without possessing the virtuous affections in a strong degree, no man can attain to eminence in the sublime parts of eloquence. He must feel what a good man feels, if he expects greatly to move, or to interest mankind. The ardent sentiments of honor, virtue, magnanimity, and public spirit only, can kindle that fire of genius, and call up into the mind those high ideas, which attract the admiration of ages ; and if this spirit be necessary to produce the most distinguished efforts of eloquence, it must be necessary also to the relishing of them with proper taste and feeling.

To Belles Lettres, also, belongs what ? They also exercise the mind without what ; and lead to inquiries of what kind ? What station do the pleasures of taste occupy ? What is justly considered an unpromising symptom in youth ; and of what does it raise suspicions ? What is the effect of a cultivated taste ? Repeat the poetic illustration. What do the elevated sentiments and high examples which poetry, eloquence, and history, are often bringing under our view, naturally tend to nourish in our minds ? How is this remark illustrated ? What is certain ; and why ? What, only, can kindle that fire of genius, which attracts the admiration of ages ; and what remark follows ?

LECTURE II.

TASTE.

THERE are few subjects on which men talk more loosely and indistinctly than on taste; few which it is more difficult to explain with precision; and none which in these lectures will appear more dry and abstract. In our remarks on the subject, we shall pursue the following order:—First, explain the nature of taste as a power or faculty of the human mind: next, consider how far it is an improvable faculty: then show the sources of its improvement, and its characters in its most perfect state: and in the last place, examine the various fluctuations to which it is liable, and inquire whether there be any standard to which the different tastes of men can be brought, in order to distinguish the false from the true.

Taste may be defined, “The power of receiving pleasure from the beauties of nature and of art.” The first question that occurs concerning it is, whether it is an internal sense, or an exertion of reason? Reason is a very general term; but if we understand by it that power of the mind which in speculative matters discovers truth, and in practical matters judges of the fitness of means to an end, it is evident that taste cannot be resolved into any such operation. It is not merely through a discovery of the understanding or a deduction of argument, that the mind receives pleasure from a beautiful prospect or a fine poem. Such objects often strike us intuitively, and make a strong impression, when we are unable to assign the reason of our being pleased. They sometimes strike, in the same manner, the philosopher and the peasant; the boy and the man. Hence the faculty by which we relish such beauties, seems more nearly allied to a feeling of sense, than to a process of the understanding; and, accordingly, from an external sense it has borrowed its name. But, though taste be ultimately founded on a certain natural

Of the subject of this lecture, what is observed? In our remarks upon it, what order shall we pursue? How may taste be defined; and what is the first question that occurs concerning it? Of reason what is remarked? How does it appear evident that taste cannot be resolved into any operation of reason; and why? What farther illustration of this remark follows? Hence, of the faculty by which we relish such beauties, what is observed? But, though taste be ultimately founded on a certain natural instinctive sensibility to beauty, yet what follows?

instinctive sensibility to beauty, yet reason assists it in many of its operations, and serves to enlarge its power.

Taste is a faculty common, in some degree, to all mankind. Nothing that belongs to human nature is more general than the relish of beauty of one kind or other ; of what is orderly, proportioned, grand, harmonious, new, or sprightly. In children, the rudiments of taste discover themselves very early, in a thousand instances ; in their fondness for regular bodies, their admiration of pictures and statues, and their strong attachment to whatever is new or marvellous. The most ignorant peasants are delighted with ballads and tales, and are struck with the beautiful appearance of nature in the earth and heavens. Even in the deserts of America, where human nature appears in its most uncultivated state, the savages have their ornaments of dress, their war and their death songs, their harangues and their orators. The principles of taste must, therefore, be deeply founded in the human mind. To have some discernment of beauty, is no less essential to man, than to possess the attributes of speech and reason.

But although none be wholly devoid of this faculty, yet the degrees in which it is possessed, are widely different. In some men, only the feeble glimmerings of taste appear ; the beauties which they relish are of the coarsest kind ; and of these they have but a weak and confused impression : while in others, taste rises to an acute discernment, and a lively enjoyment of the most refined beauties. In general, it may be observed, that in the powers and pleasures of taste, there is a more remarkable inequality among men, than is usually found in point of common sense, reason, and judgment. This inequality is, doubtless, to be ascribed, in part, to the different frames of their natures ; to nicer organs, and finer internal powers, with which some are endowed beyond others : yet it is owing, still more, to culture and education.

Taste is certainly one of the most improvable faculties which adorns our nature. Of the truth of this remark, we

From what does it appear that taste is a faculty, common, in some degree, to all men ; and how is this remark fully illustrated ? Of the principles of taste, therefore, what is observed, and why ? Though none be entirely devoid of this faculty, yet from what does it appear that the degrees in which it is possessed are widely different ? What may, in general, be observed ; and to what is this inequality to be ascribed ? How may we be convinced of the truth of the remark, that taste is one of our most improvable faculties ?

may easily be convinced, by only reflecting on the immense superiority which education and improvement give to civilized above barbarous nations, in refinement of taste; and on the superiority which they give in the same nation to those who have studied the liberal arts, above the rude and untaught vulgar. The difference is so great, that there is, perhaps, no one particular in which these two classes of men are so far removed from each other, as in respect of the powers and the pleasures of taste: and assuredly for this difference, no other general cause can be assigned, but culture and education.

Exercise is the chief source of improvement in all our faculties, either bodily or mental; and even in our external senses, though these are less the subject of cultivation than any of our other powers. We see how acute the senses become in persons whose trade or profession leads to nice exertions of them. Of this we have a clear proof in that part of taste, which is called an ear for music. Only the simplest and plainest compositions are relished at first; practice extends our pleasure; teaches us to relish finer melody, and by degrees enables us to enter into the intricate and compounded pleasures of harmony. So an eye for the beauties of painting, is never at once acquired. It is gradually formed by being conversant among pictures, and studying the works of the best masters. In the same manner, with respect to the beauties of composition and discourse, attention to the most approved models, study of the best authors, comparisons of lower and higher degrees of the same beauties, operate towards the refinement of taste. At first, the sentiment is obscure and confused; but, by experience, the taste, at length, becomes more enlightened and exact. We not only perceive the character of the whole, but the beauties and defects of each part; and are able to describe the peculiar qualities which we praise or blame.

But although taste be ultimately founded on sensibility, it must not be considered as instinctive sensibility alone. Rea-

Of the greatness of the difference between these classes, what is observed; and for this difference, what cause, only, can be assigned? Of the effect of exercise, upon both our bodily and mental faculties, what is remarked; and even in our external senses also? How is this remark illustrated, in what is called an ear for music; an eye for the beauties of painting; and, also, the beauties of composition and discourse? Though taste be ultimately founded on sensibility, yet why may it not be considered instinctive sensibility alone?

son and good sense have so extensive an influence on all the operations and decisions of taste, that a thoroughly good taste may well be considered as a power compounded of natural sensibility to beauty, and of improved understanding. To be convinced of the truth of this position, we may observe, that the greater part of the productions of genius, are no other than the imitations of nature—representations of the characters, actions, and manners of men. The pleasure which we receive from such imitations, as representations, is founded on mere taste: but to judge whether they be properly executed, belongs to the understanding, which compares the copy with the original. In reading, for instance, such a poem as the *Æniad*, a great part of our pleasure arises from the plan or story being well conducted, and all the parts being joined together with probability and due connection—from the characters being taken from nature, the sentiments being suited to the characters, and the style to the sentiments. The pleasure which is derived from a poem so conducted, is felt or enjoyed by taste as an internal sense; but the discovery of this conduct in the poem is owing to reason; and the more that reason enables us to discover such propriety in the conduct, the greater will be our pleasure.

From these two sources then, first, the frequent exercise of taste, and next, the application of reason to the objects of taste, taste as a power of the mind receives its improvement. But we must not forget to add, that as a sound head, so likewise a good heart is a very material requisite to just taste. The moral beauties are not only themselves superior to all others, but they exert an influence, either more near or more remote, on a great variety of other objects of taste. He who has no admiration of what is truly praiseworthy, nor the proper sympathetic sense of what is soft and tender, must have a very imperfect relish of the highest beauties of eloquence and poetry.

The characters of taste, when brought to its most improved state, are all reducible to two; Delicacy and Correctness.

To be convinced of the truth of this proposition, what may we observe? On what is the pleasure which we receive from such imitations founded; but how do we judge whether they be properly executed? How is this remark illustrated, from the reading of such a poem as the *Æniad*? From what two sources, then, does taste receive its improvement? But what remark must we not forget to add; and of moral beauties, what is observed? Who must have a very imperfect relish of the highest beauties of eloquence and poetry. What are the characters of taste, when brought to its most perfect state?

Delicacy of taste respects, principally, the perfection of that natural sensibility on which taste is founded. It implies those finer organs or powers which enable us to discover beauties that lie hid from the vulgar eye. It is judged of by the same marks, by which we judge of the delicacy of an external sense. As the goodness of the palate is not tried by strong flavors, but by a mixture of ingredients, where, notwithstanding the confusion, we remain sensible of each; in like manner, delicacy of internal sense appears, by a quick and lively sensibility to its finest, most compounded, or most latent objects.

Correctness of taste, respects chiefly, the improvement which that faculty receives through its connection with the understanding. A man of correct taste is one who is never imposed on by counterfeit beauties; who carries always in his mind that standard of good sense which he employs in judging of every thing. He estimates with propriety the comparative merit of the several beauties which he meets with in any work of genius; refers them to their proper classes; assigns the principles, as far as they can be traced, whence their power of pleasing flows; and is pleased himself precisely in that degree in which he ought to be pleased, and no more. Delicacy and correctness of taste, it is true, mutually imply each other. No taste can be exquisitely delicate without being correct; nor can it be thoroughly correct without being delicate: but still a predominancy of one or other quality in the mixture is often visible. The power of delicacy is chiefly seen in discerning the true merit of a work; the power of correctness, in rejecting false pretensions to merit. Delicacy leans more to feeling; correctness more to reason and judgment: the former is more the gift of nature; the latter, more the product of culture and art.

The variations of taste have been so great and frequent, as to create a suspicion with some, whether, in relation to it, there be any standard, by which a true taste may be distinguished from one that is corrupt. In architecture, in

What does delicacy of taste principally respect; and what does it imply? By what marks is it judged of; and how is this illustrated? What does correctness of taste chiefly respect? Of a man of correct taste, what is remarked? How does it appear that delicacy and correctness of taste mutually imply each other; but still, what is often visible? In what is the power of delicacy chiefly seen; and in what the power of correctness? To what do they respectively lean; and whence are they derived? Of what have the variations of taste created a suspicion? How is this illustrated, from architecture, poetry, and eloquence?

poetry, and in eloquence, not only one nation, but also one age, has differed from another. But let it be observed, that, if there be no such thing as a standard of taste, all tastes are equally good; the taste of a Hottentot or a Laplander, is as delicate and as correct, as that of a Longinus, or an Addison. There must then be a good and a bad, a right and a wrong, in taste, as well as in other things. It is not, however, in matters of taste, as in questions of mere reason, where there is but one conclusion that can be true, and all the rest erroneous. Truth, which is the object of reason, is one; beauty, which is the object of taste, is manifold. Taste, therefore, admits of diversity of objects; but this can take place only where the objects themselves are different. Where one man condemns that as deformed, which another pronounces to be highly beautiful, there is no longer a diversity, but a direct opposition of taste; the one must be right, the other wrong.

The standard of taste to which the ultimate appeal must ever lie, is the sense of mankind—the taste of men in polished and flourishing nations, where arts are cultivated and manners refined; where works of genius are subjected to free discussions, and taste is improved by science and philosophy. Even among such nations, however, the proper operations of taste may be warped by the state of religion, or the form of government; by a licentious court, or an admired genius; by envy, popular humor, or party spirit. But in the course of time, the genuine taste of human nature will again disclose itself, and gain the ascendancy over any fantastic and corrupted modes, which casual circumstances may have introduced.

That taste is not an arbitrary principle, and subject to the fancy of every individual, is evident. Its foundation is the same in every human mind. It is built upon sentiments and perceptions which belong to our nature; and which, in general, operate in the same uniformity as our

But, if there be no standard of taste, what consequence will follow; and what must, therefore, exist? Whether the same thing holds in matters of taste, that holds in questions of mere reasoning, what is observed; and of truth and beauty what is remarked? Though taste admits of diversity of objects, yet where, only, can this diversity take place; and how is this illustrated? What is the standard of taste, to which the ultimate appeal must ever lie? Among such nations, however, by what may the proper operations of taste be warped; but, in the course of time, what will take place? What evidence have we that taste is not an arbitrary principle; and on what is it built?

other intellectual principles. When these sentiments are perverted by ignorance and prejudice, they are capable of being rectified by reason. Their sound and natural state is ultimately determined, by comparing them with the general taste of mankind. Let men declaim as much as they please, concerning the caprice and the uncertainty of taste, it is found, by experience, that there are beauties which, if they be displayed in a proper light, have power to command lasting and general admiration. In every composition, what interests the imagination and touches the heart, pleases all ages and all nations. There is a certain string, to which, when properly struck, the human heart immediately vibrates.

Hence the universal testimony which the most improved nations of the earth have united, throughout a long series of ages, to bestow on some few works of genius; such as the *Iliad* of Homer, and the *Æniad* of Virgil. Hence the authority which such works have acquired, as standards, in some degree, of poetical composition; since, from them, we are able to collect what the sense of mankind is concerning those beauties which give them the highest pleasure, and which, therefore, poetry ought to exhibit. Authority or prejudice may, in one age or country, give a short-lived reputation to an insipid poet, or a bad artist; but when foreigners, or when posterity examine his works, his faults are discerned, and the genuine taste of human nature appears. Time overthrows the illusions of opinion, but establishes the decisions of nature.

When these sentiments are perverted by ignorance and prejudice, how may they be restored; and how is their sound and natural state ultimately determined? Though men may declaim concerning the caprice of taste, yet what is found by experience to be true? Of every composition what is observed; and why is this the case? Hence, on what works has the universal testimony of mankind been bestowed? Why have such works obtained authority as standards of poetical composition? What may authority or prejudice do; but when his works come to be examined, what will follow?

ANALYSIS.

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The division of the subject. 2. The definition and nature of Taste. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Instinct and Reason. B. The universality of Taste. C. The various degrees of Taste. D. The sources of its improvement. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Exercise. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> b. Reason and good sense. c. Morality. 3. The characters of Taste. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Delicacy. B. Correctness. 4. The variations of Taste. 5. The standard of Taste. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Arguments in favor of a standard. |
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LECTURE III.

CRITICISM—GENIUS—PLEASURES OF TASTE— SUBLIMITY IN OBJECTS.

CRITICISM is the application of taste and of good sense to the several fine arts. Its object is to distinguish what is beautiful and what is faulty in every performance; from particular instances to ascend to general principles; and so to form rules or conclusions concerning the several kinds of beauty in works of genius.

The rules of criticism are not formed by a train of abstract reasoning, independent of facts and observations. Criticism is an art founded wholly on experience—on the observation of such beauties as have been found to please mankind most generally. For example: Aristotle's rules concerning the unity of action in dramatic and epic compositions, were not rules first discovered by logical reasoning, and then applied to poetry; but they were drawn from the practice of Homer and Sophocles: they were founded upon observing the superior pleasure which we receive from the relation of an action which is one and entire, beyond what we receive from the relation of scattered and unconnected facts. Such observations arising at first from feeling and experience, were found, on examination, to be so consonant to reason and to the principles of human nature, as to pass into established rules, and to be conveniently applied for judging of the excellency of any performance.

A masterly genius, it is true, will, of himself, untaught, compose in such a manner as shall be agreeable to the most material rules of criticism; for, as these rules are founded in nature, nature will suggest them in practice. Homer, it is more than probable, was acquainted with no system of the art of poetry. Guided by genius alone, he composed, in verse, a regular story, which all succeeding ages have

What is criticism; and what is its object? Of the rules of criticism, what is observed? On what is criticism founded; and what illustration is given? Of such observations, what is observed? In what manner may a masterly genius, though untaught, compose; and why? What illustration of this remark is given?

admired. But this is no argument against the usefulness of criticism as an art: for as no human genius is perfect, there is no writer but may receive assistance from critical observations upon the beauties and faults of those who have gone before him. No rules can, indeed, supply the defect of genius, or inspire it where it is wanting, but they may often direct it into its proper channel: they may correct its extravagances, and point out to it, the most just and proper imitations of nature? Critical rules are designed chiefly to show the faults that ought to be avoided. To nature we must be indebted for the production of eminent beauties.

It has long been the custom of petty authors to inveigh against both critics and criticism. They represent critics as the great abridgers of the native liberty of genius, and the imposers of unnatural shackles and bonds upon writers. In these representations they proceed upon the supposition that critics judge altogether by rule and not by feeling; which, however, is so far from being true, that they who judge in this manner are mere pedants, not critics. For all the rules of genuine criticism are ultimately founded on feeling; and taste and feeling are necessary to guide us in the application of these rules to every particular instance.

An objection more plausible may be formed against criticism, from the applause that some performances have received from the public, which, when accurately considered, are found to violate the rules established by criticism. Now, although the public is the ultimate judge in this matter, yet it should be remembered that its judgment is often too hastily given. The genuine public taste does not always appear in the applause that a work may, on its first publication, receive; for, by complying with prevailing prejudices, an author may gain great temporary reputation; but it will be only temporary: for the judgment of true criticism, and the voice of the public, when once become unprejudiced, and dispassionate, will ever coincide.

Why is this no argument against the usefulness of criticism as an art? Though no rules can supply the defect of genius, or inspire it where it is wanting, yet what may they do? For what are critical rules designed; and for what must we be indebted to nature? What has long been the custom of petty authors; and how do they represent critics? In these representations, upon what supposition do they proceed; and of those who judge in this manner, what is observed; and why? From what may an objection, more plausible, be formed against criticism? Of the public as the ultimate judge in this matter, what is remarked? How may an author gain great temporary reputation; but why will it be only temporary?

There are, it is true, some works that have acquired general, and even lasting admiration, notwithstanding the gross transgressions of the laws of criticism which they contain ; but then we are to remark, that it is not for these transgressions that they have gained the public admiration, but in spite of them. They possess other beauties which are conformable to the strictest rules ; and the force of these beauties has been so great as to overpower all censure, and to give the public a degree of satisfaction superior to the disgust arising from their blemishes.

As the terms taste and genius are frequently joined together, and therefore, by inaccurate thinkers, confounded, it is necessary to point out the difference between them. Taste consists in the power of judging ; genius, in the power of executing. Genius, therefore, deserves to be considered as a higher power of the mind than taste : it always imports something inventive or creative ; which does not rest in mere sensibility to beauty, where it is perceived, but which can produce new beauties, and exhibit them in such a manner as strongly to impress the minds of others. Refined taste forms the critic ; but genius is necessary to form the poet, or the orator.

Genius, in the common acceptation of the word, extends much farther than to the objects of taste. It signifies that talent or aptitude which we receive from nature, for excelling in any one thing whatever. Thus we speak of a genius for mathematics, for poetry, for war, for politics, or for any of the mechanical arts.

Genius may be greatly improved by art and study ; but being derived from nature, by them alone it cannot be acquired. As it is a higher faculty than taste, it is ever, according to the usual frugality of nature, more limited in the sphere of its operations. It is not uncommon to meet with persons who have an excellent taste in several of the polite arts ; such as music, poetry, painting, and eloquence :

There are, however, some works that have acquired what ; and why is this the case ? Why is it necessary to point out the difference between taste and genius ; and in what do they, respectively, consist ? How does genius, therefore, deserve to be considered ; and what does it always import ? Which forms the critic, and which, the poet or the orator ? What does genius, in the common acceptation of the word, signify ; and thus we speak of a genius for what ? How may genius be greatly improved ; but why can it not, by them alone, be acquired ? As it is a higher faculty than taste, what follows ? To meet with persons of what description is not uncommon ; but what is much more rare ?

but to find one who is an excellent performer in all these arts, is much more rare; or rather, indeed, such a one is not to be looked for. A sort of universal genius, or one who is equally and indifferently inclined towards several different professions and arts, is not likely to excel in any. Although there may be some few exceptions, yet, in general, it is true, that when the bent of the mind is wholly directed towards some one object exclusively, there is the fairest prospect of success in that, whatever it may be. The rays must converge to a point, in order to glow intensely. Youth are highly interested in this remark, since it may teach them to examine with care, and to pursue with ardor, that path which nature has marked out for their peculiar exertions.

The nature of taste, the nature and importance of criticism, and the distinction between taste and genius, being thus explained, the sources of the pleasures of taste are next to be considered. Here opens a very extensive field; no less than all the pleasures of the imagination, as they are commonly called, whether afforded to us by natural objects, or by the imitations and descriptions of them. It is not, however, necessary to the purpose of this work, that all of these should be examined fully; the pleasure which we receive from discourse or writing, being the main object of them. All that is proposed is to give some openings into the pleasures of taste in general; and to insist more particularly upon sublimity and beauty.

We are far from having yet attained to any system concerning this subject. A regular inquiry into it, was first attempted by Mr. Addison, in his Essay on the Pleasures of the Imagination. He has reduced these pleasures under three heads—beauty, grandeur, and novelty. His speculations on this subject, if not exceedingly profound, are, however, very beautiful and entertaining; and he has the merit of having opened a track, which was before unbeaten. The advances made since his time, in this curious part of

Of a sort of universal genius, what is observed? In what remark are youth highly interested; and for what reason? The nature of taste, &c., being thus explained, what are next to be considered? Here how extensive a field opens before us; but why are not all these to be examined fully? What, only, is it proposed to do? By whom was a regular inquiry into this subject first attempted; and where? Under what three heads has he reduced these pleasures; and of his speculations on this subject, what is remarked? Why have not the advances made since his time, in this part of philosophical criticism been very considerable?

philosophical criticism, are not very considerable; owing, doubtless, to that thinness and subtilty which are found to be properties of all the feelings of taste. It is difficult to enumerate the several objects that give pleasure to taste: it is more difficult to define all those which have been discovered, and to reduce them under proper classes; and when we would go farther, and investigate the efficient causes of the pleasure which we receive from such objects, here we find ourselves at the greatest loss. For instance, we all learn by experience, that certain figures of bodies appear to us more beautiful than others. On inquiring farther, we find that the regularity of some figures, and the graceful variety of others, are the foundation of the beauty which we discern in them; but when we attempt to go a step beyond this, and inquire why regularity and variety produce, in our minds, the sensation of beauty, any reason we can assign is extremely imperfect.

It is some consolation, however, that although the efficient cause be obscure, the final cause of these sensations lies, in many cases, more open: and here we must observe, the strong impression which the powers of taste and imagination are calculated to give of the benignity of our Creator. By endowing us with such powers, he has widely enlarged the sphere of the pleasure of human life; and those, too, of a kind the most pure and innocent. The necessary purposes of life might have been abundantly answered, though our senses of seeing and hearing had only served to distinguish external objects, without conveying to us any of those refined and delicate sensations of beauty and grandeur, with which we are now so much delighted.

The pleasure which arises from sublimity or grandeur, deserves to be treated at some length, both, because it has a character more precise and distinctly marked than any other of the pleasures of the imagination, and because it coincides more directly with our main subject. For the greater distinctness, the grandeur or sublimity of external

What is a difficult task; and where do we find ourselves at the greatest loss? What do we all learn by experience; and from farther inquiry what results? What, however, is some consolation; and here, what must we observe? By endowing us with such powers, what has our Creator done; and how might the necessary purposes of life have been answered? Why does the pleasure which arises from sublimity, deserve to be treated at some length; and in considering them, what course is pursued?

objects themselves, shall first be considered; and afterwards, the description of such objects, or, what is called the sublime in writing.

The simplest form of external grandeur, appears in the vast and boundless prospects presented to us by nature; such as wide extended plains, to which the eye can see no limits; the firmament of heaven, or the boundless expanse of the ocean. All vastness produces the impression of sublimity. It is to be remarked, however, that space extended in length, makes not so strong an impression as height or depth. Though a boundless plain be a grand object, yet a high mountain, to which we look up, or an awful precipice or tower, whence we look down on the objects which lie below, is still more so. The excessive grandeur of the firmament arises from its height, joined to its boundless extent; and that of the ocean, not from its extent alone, but from its perpetual motion and irresistible force. Wherever space is concerned, it is clear that amplitude, or greatness of extent, in one dimension or other, is necessary to grandeur. Remove all bounds from any object, and you immediately render it sublime. Hence, infinite space, endless numbers, and eternal duration, fill the mind with great ideas.

The most copious source of sublime ideas seems to be derived from the exertion of great power and force. Hence the grandeur of earthquakes and burning mountains; of great conflagrations; of the boisterous ocean; of the tempestuous storm; of thunder and lightning; and of all the uncommon violence of the elements. A stream which glides along gently within its banks is a beautiful object; but when it precipitates itself with the impetuosity and noise of a torrent, it immediately becomes a sublime one. A race horse is beheld with pleasure, but it is the war horse, "whose neck is clothed with thunder," that carries grandeur in its idea. The engagement of two great armies, as it is the highest exertion of human might, combines a variety of sources

In what does the simplest form of external grandeur appear; and what instances are mentioned? What effect does all vastness produce; yet what is to be remarked; and how is this illustrated? From what does the excessive grandeur of the firmament arise; and from what, that of the ocean? Wherever space is concerned, what is clear? Remove all bounds from any object and what will follow; and hence what fills the mind with great ideas? Whence is the most copious source of sublime ideas derived; and hence what follows? How is this remark fully illustrated?

of the sublime ; and has, accordingly, been always considered one of the most striking and magnificent spectacles that can be either presented to the eye, or exhibited to the imagination in description.

For the farther illustration of this subject, it is proper to remark, that all ideas of the solemn and awful kind, and even bordering on the terrible, tend greatly to assist the sublime ; such as darkness, solitude, and silence. The firmament when filled with stars scattered in such vast numbers, and with such magnificent profusion, strikes the imagination with a more awful grandeur than when we view it enlightened by all the splendor of the sun. The deep sound of a great bell, or the striking of a great clock, are, at any time, grand ; but when heard amid the silence and stillness of the night, they become doubly so. Darkness is very commonly applied for adding sublimity to all our ideas of the Deity. "He maketh darkness his pavilion ; he dwelleth in the thick clouds." So Milton :

How oft, amidst
Thick clouds and dark, does Heaven's all-ruling Sire
Choose to reside, his glory unobscured,
And with the majesty of darkness round
Circles his throne.

Book II. 263.

Obscurity, we may farther remark, is also favorable to the sublime. Though it render the object indistinct, yet the impression may be great ; for, as Mr. Burke has ingeniously observed, it is one thing to make an idea clear, and another, to make it affecting to the imagination. Thus, almost all the descriptions given us of the appearances of supernatural beings, carry some sublimity, though the conceptions which they afford us be confused and indistinct. Their sublimity arises from the ideas, which they always convey, of superior power and might, joined with an awful obscurity. No ideas, it is plain, are so sublime as those taken from the Supreme Being ; the most unknown, but the greatest of all objects ; the infinity of whose nature, and the eternity of whose duration, joined with the omnipotence

For the farther illustration of this subject, what is it proper to remark ; and what examples are given ? How is this, also, illustrated ? For what is darkness very commonly applied ; and what illustrations follow ? What is also favorable to the sublime ; what is remarked of it ; and what has Mr. Burke ingeniously observed ? How is this illustrated in the descriptions of supernatural beings ; and from what does their sublimity arise ? Of the Supreme Being, and of the ideas taken from him what is observed ?

of his power, though they surpass our conceptions, yet exalt them to the highest.

As is obscurity, so disorder, too, is very compatible with grandeur; nay, it frequently heightens it. Few things that are strictly regular and methodical, appear sublime. We see the limits on every side; we feel ourselves confined; there is no room for the mind to exert any great effort. Though exact proportion of parts, often enters into the beautiful, yet it is altogether disregarded in the sublime. A great mass of rocks, thrown together by the hand of nature with wildness and confusion, strikes the mind with more grandeur, than if they had been adjusted to one another with the most accurate symmetry.

There still remains to be mentioned, one class of sublime objects, which may be called the moral, or sentimental sublime; arising from certain exertions of the human mind—from certain affections and actions of our fellow-creatures. These will be found chiefly of that class, which comes under the name of magnanimity or heroism: and they produce an effect extremely similar to what is produced by the view of grand objects in nature; filling the mind with admiration, and elevating it above itself. Wherever, in some critical and dangerous situation, we behold a man uncommonly intrepid, and resting upon himself; superior to passion and to fear; animated by some great principle to the contempt of popular opinion, of selfish interest, of dangers or of death; we are struck with a sense of the sublime. Thus Porus, when taken prisoner by Alexander, after a gallant defence, and asked how he wished to be treated, answering "Like a king;" and Cæsar, chiding the pilot, who was afraid to set out with him in a storm, "Quid times? Cæsarem vehis;" are good instances of the sentimental sublime.

Various theories have been formed, to ascertain whether we are able to discover some one distinct quality, in which all the different objects that produce the sublime, coincide. Some have imagined that amplitude, or great extent, joined with simplicity, is either immediately, or remotely, the fun-

As is obscurity, so also what is very compatible with grandeur; and how is this fully illustrated? What class of sublime objects still remains to be considered; and from what do they arise? Under what name do they come; and what effect do they produce? When are we struck with a sense of the sublime; and what instances of illustration follow? To ascertain what, have various theories been formed? What have some imagined to be the fundamental quality of the sublime; but, of it, what is observed?

damental quality of whatever is sublime; but we have seen that amplitude is confined to one species of sublime objects only, and cannot, without violent straining, be applied to them all. Mr. Burke supposes that terror is the great source of the sublime; and that no objects have this character, but such as produce impressions of pain and danger. It is, indeed, true, that many terrible objects are highly sublime; and that grandeur does not refuse an alliance with the idea of danger. But the sublime does not consist wholly in modes of danger, or of pain. In many grand objects, there is not the smallest coincidence with terror; as in the magnificent prospect of wide extended plains, and of the starry firmament; or in the moral dispositions and sentiments, which we contemplate with high admiration. In many painful and terrible objects also, there is evidently no sort of grandeur. The amputation of a limb, or the bite of a snake, are exceedingly terrible; but are destitute of all claim whatever, to sublimity. Mighty force or power, perhaps, whether attended by terror or not, whether employed in protecting or in alarming us, has a better title, than any thing that has yet been mentioned, to be considered the fundamental quality of the sublime. There appears to be no sublime object, into the idea of which, strength and force, either enter not directly, or with which they are not intimately connected, in conducting our thoughts to some astonishing power, as concerned in the production of the object.

What is Mr. Burke's theory; and what is remarked of it? What has a better title than any thing that has yet been mentioned, to be considered the fundamental quality of the sublime; and why?

ANALYSIS.

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Criticism. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. The definition of Criticism. B. Its nature and object. C. Objections to it considered. 2. Genius. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Taste and Genius distinguished. B. The nature of Genius, and its connection with Taste. 3. The pleasures of Taste. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Mr. Addison's theory. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> B. The sources of the pleasures of Taste. 4. Sublimity in external objects. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. The nature of Sublimity. B. The sources of Sublimity. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Solemn and awful objects. b. Obscurity. c. Disorder. C. Moral Sublimity. D. The foundation of the Sublime. |
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LECTURE IV.

THE SUBLIME IN WRITING.

HAVING treated of grandeur or sublimity in external objects, the way seems now to be cleared, for treating, with more advantage, of the descriptions of such objects; or, of what is called the sublime in writing.

The true sense of the sublime in composition is, undoubtedly, such a description of objects, or exhibition of sentiments, which are, in themselves, of a sublime nature, as shall give us strong impressions of them. Its foundation must always be laid in the nature of the object described. Unless it be such an object as, if presented to our eyes, if exhibited to us in reality, would raise ideas of that elevating, that awful and magnificent kind, which we call sublime; the description, however finely drawn, is not entitled to come under this class. This excludes all objects that are merely beautiful, gay, or elegant. Besides, the object must not only be, in itself, sublime, but it must be set before us in such a light as is most proper to give us a clear and full impression of it; it must be described with strength, with conciseness, and simplicity. This depends, chiefly, upon the lively impression which the poet, or orator, has of the subject which he exhibits; and upon his being deeply affected, and warmed, by the sublime idea which he would convey. If his own feelings be languid, he can never inspire us with any strong emotion. Instances, which are extremely necessary on this subject, will clearly show the importance of these requisites.

It is, generally speaking, among the most ancient authors, that we are to look for the most striking instances of the sublime. The early ages of the world, and the rude uncultivated state of society, appear to have been peculiarly

Having treated of grandeur, or sublimity in external objects, for what does the way now seem cleared? What is the true sense of the sublime in composition; and where must its foundation always be laid? That the description may come under this class, it must be an object of what kind; and what objects does this exclude? Besides being in itself sublime, how must the object be set before us, and described? On what does this depend; and if his own feelings be languid, what will follow? Among what authors are we to look for the most striking instances of the sublime; and why?

favorable to the strong emotions of sublimity. The genius of mankind was then very prone to admiration and astonishment. Meeting continually with new and strange objects, their imagination was kept glowing, and their passions were raised to the utmost. They thought and expressed themselves boldly, and without restraint. In the progress of society, the genius and manners of men have undergone a change more favorable to accuracy, than to strength or sublimity.

Of all writings, ancient or modern, the Sacred Scriptures afford us the highest instances of the sublime. The descriptions of the Deity, in them, are wonderfully noble—both from the grandeur of the object, and the manner of representing it. What an assemblage, for instance, of awful and sublime ideas is presented to us, in that passage of the XVIIIth Psalm, where an appearance of the Almighty is described: “In my distress I called upon the Lord: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him. Then, the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills were moved; because he was wroth. He bowed the heavens, and came down, and darkness was under his feet; and he did ride upon a Cherub, and did fly; yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind. He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him were dark waters, and thick clouds of the sky.” Here, the circumstances of darkness and terror, are applied with great propriety and success, for heightening the sublime. The noted instance given by Longinus, from Moses, “God said, let there be light; and there was light,” belongs to the true sublime; and the sublimity of it arises from the strong conception it gives, of an exertion of power, producing its effect with the utmost speed and facility. A thought of the same kind is magnificently amplified in the 24th, 27th, and 28th verses of the LXIVth chapter of Isaiah.

Homer is a poet, who, in all ages, and by all critics, has

To what was the genius of mankind then prone; and what follows? In the progress of society, what change have the genius and manners of men undergone? Of all writings, which affords us the highest instances of the sublime; and of the descriptions of the Deity in them, what is observed? Repeat the passage from the XVIIIth Psalm, illustrative of this remark; and of it what is observed? What instance is given by Longinus, from Moses; and from what does its sublimity arise? Where is a thought of the same kind magnificently amplified? What is observed of Homer; and to what is he indebted for his sublimity?

been greatly admired for his sublimity; and he is much indebted for it, to that native and unaffected simplicity which characterizes his manner. His description of hosts engaging; the animation, the fire, and rapidity which he throws into his battles, present to every reader of the *Iliad*, frequent instances of sublime writing. His introduction of the gods, tends often to heighten, in a high degree, the majesty of his warlike scenes. In the XXth book, where all the gods take part in the engagement, according as they severally favor either the Grecians or the Trojans, the poet's genius is signally displayed, and the description rises into the most awful magnificence. All nature seems to be in commotion. Jupiter thunders in the heavens; Neptune strikes the earth with his trident; the ships, the city, and the mountains shake; the earth trembles to its centre; Pluto starts from his throne, in dread, lest the secrets of the infernal regions should be laid open to the view of mortals. The following is Mr. Pope's translation of the passage alluded to; which, though, perhaps, inferior to the original, is yet highly animated and sublime.

But when the powers descending swell'd the fight,
Then tumult rose, fierce rage, and pale affright:
Now through the trembling shores Minerva calls,
As now she thunders from the Grecian walls.
Mars, hov'ring o'er his Troy, his terror shrouds
In gloomy tempests, and a night of clouds;
Now through each Trojan heart he fury pours,
With voice divine, from Illion's topmost towers—
Above, the sire of gods his thunder rolls,
And peals on peals redoubled, rend the poles;
Beneath, stern Neptune shakes the solid ground,
The forests wave, the mountains nod around;
Through all her summits tremble Ida's woods,
And from their sources boil her hundred floods:
Troy's turrets totter on the rocking plain,
And the toss'd navies beat the heaving main.
Deep in the dismal region of the dead,
The infernal monarch reared his horrid head,
Leap'd from his throne, lest Neptune's arm should lay
His dark dominions open to the day;
And pour in light on Pluto's drear abodes,
Abhor'd by men, and dreadful e'en to god's.
Such wars the immortals wage; such horror's rend
The world's vast concave when the gods contend.

What present, to every reader of the *Iliad*, frequent instances of sublime writing? What is observed of his introduction of the gods; and of the passage from the XXth. book what is remarked? Repeat Mr. Pope's translation of it.

The works of Ossian abound with examples of the sublime. The subjects of which that author treats, and the manner in which he writes, are particularly favorable to it. He possesses all the plain and venerable manner of the ancient times. He deals in no superfluous or gaudy ornaments; but throws forth his images with a rapid conciseness, which enables them to strike the mind with the greatest force. Among poets of more polished times we are to look for the graces of correct writing, for just proportion of parts, and skilfully conducted narratives. But amidst the rude scenes of nature and of society, such as Ossian describes; amidst rocks and torrents, and whirlwinds and battles, dwells the sublime; and naturally associates itself with that grave and solemn spirit which distinguishes the author of Fingal.

These instances have been produced, in order to show how essential conciseness and simplicity are to sublime writing. Simplicity is properly opposed to studied and profuse ornament; and conciseness to superfluous expression. Why a defect, either in conciseness or simplicity, is peculiarly hurtful to the sublime, may be easily seen. The emotion excited in the mind by some great or noble object, raises it considerably above its common pitch. A sort of enthusiasm is produced extremely agreeable while it lasts; but from which the mind is tending every moment to fall into its ordinary tone. When an author, therefore, has brought us, or is attempting to bring us into this state; if he multiplies words unnecessarily, if he decks the sublime object on all sides with glittering ornaments; nay, if he throws in any one decoration which falls, in the least, below the principal image, that moment he altars the key; he relaxes the tension of the mind; the strength of the feeling is emasculated; the beautiful may remain, but the sublime is gone. Homer's description of the nod of Jupiter, as shaking the heavens, has been admired in all ages, as highly sublime. Literally translated, it runs thus: "He spoke, and bending his sable brows, gave the awful nod; while he shook the celestial locks of his immor-

What is observed of the works of Ossian; and why are they so sublime? For what are we to look among poets of more modern times; but where dwells the sublime, and with what does it naturally associate itself? Why have these instances been produced; and to what are they respectively opposed? Why is a defect in either, peculiarly hurtful to the sublime? What is remarked of Homer's description of the nod of Jupiter; and how is it literally translated?

tal head, all Olympus was shaken." The following is Mr. Pope's translation :

He spoke : and awful bends his sable brows,
Shakes his ambrosial curls, and gives the nod,
The stamp of fate, and sanction of a god.
High heaven with trembling the dread signal took,
And all Olympus to its centre shook.

The image is spread out, and attempted to be beautified ; but it is, in reality, weakened. The third line—" The stamp of fate, and sanction of a god," is merely expletive, and introduced for no other reason than to fill up the rhyme ; for it interrupts the description and clogs the image. For the same reason, Jupiter is represented as shaking his locks before he gives the nod ;—" Shakes his ambrosial curls and gives the nod ;" which is trifling and insignificant : whereas, in the original, the hair of his head shaken, is the effect of his nod, and makes a happy picturesque circumstance in the description.

The boldness, freedom, and variety, of our blank verse, is infinitely more favorable than rhyme, to all kinds of sublime poetry. The fullest proof of this is afforded by Milton—an author, whose genius led him eminently to the sublime. The whole first and second books of *Paradise Lost*, are continued instances of it. Take only, for an example, the following noted description of Satan, after his fall, appearing at the head of the infernal host :

— He, above the rest,
In shape and gesture proudly eminent,
Stood like a tower ; his form had not yet lost
All her original brightness, nor appeared
Less than archangel ruined ; and the excess
Of glory obscur'd : as when the sun new risen,
Looks through the horizontal misty air,
Shorn of his beams ; or from behind the moon,
In dim eclipse, disastrous twilight sheds
On half the nations, and with fear of change
Perplexes monarchs. Darken'd so, yet shone
Above them all th' archangel.—

Here concur a variety of sources of the sublime : the principal object eminently great ; a high superior nature,

What is Mr. Pope's translation ; what is observed of it ; and why ? Of our blank verse what is observed ? By whom is the fullest proof of this offered ; and of his genius, what is remarked ? What books are continued instances of this ; and what example is given ? Of this passage what is remarked ?

fallen indeed, but erecting itself against distress; the grandeur of the principal object heightened, by associating it with so noble an idea as that of the sun suffering an eclipse; this picture shaded with all those images of change and trouble, of darkness and terror, which coincide so finely with the sublime emotion; and the whole expressed in a style and versification, easy, natural, and simple, but magnificent.

Besides simplicity and conciseness, strength, also, is essentially necessary to sublime writing. The strength of description arises, in a great measure, from a simple conciseness; but it also implies something more; namely, a proper choice of circumstances in the description, so as to exhibit the object in its full and most striking point of view. For every object has several faces, so to speak, by which it may be presented to us, according to the circumstances with which we surround it; and it will appear eminently sublime, or not, in proportion as all these circumstances are happily chosen, and of a sublime kind. In this the great art of the writer consists; and it is, indeed, the principal difficulty of sublime description. If the description be too general, and divested of circumstances, the object appears in a faint light; and makes either a feeble impression, or no impression at all, on the reader. At the same time, if any trivial or improper circumstances are mingled, the whole is degraded.

The nature of the emotion aimed at in sublime description, is such, as to admit of no mediocrity, and cannot subsist in a middle state; but must either highly transport us, or, if unsuccessful in the execution, leave us greatly disappointed and displeased. We attempt to rise along with the writer; the imagination is awakened, and put upon the stretch; but it requires to be supported; and if, in the midst of its efforts, you desert it unexpectedly, down it comes with a painful shock. When Milton, in his battle of the angels, describes them as tearing up the mountains, and throwing them at one another; there are, in his description, as Mr. Addison has observed, no circumstances but what are properly sublime:

Besides simplicity and conciseness, what, also, is essential to sublime writing; and from what does it arise? Why is this the case? Why is this the principal difficulty of sublime description? Of the nature of the emotion aimed at in sublime description what is observed; and why? How is this remark illustrated from Milton's battle of the angels?

From their foundations loos'ning to and fro,
 They pluck'd the seated hills, with all their load,
 Rocks, waters, woods; and by the shaggy tops
 Uplifting, bore them in their hands.

This idea of the giants throwing the mountains, which is in itself so grand, is rendered, by Claudian, burlesque and ridiculous; by the single circumstance, of one of his giants with the mountain Ida upon his shoulders, and a river which flowed from the mountain, running down along the giant's back, as he held it up in that posture. In Virgil's description of mount *Ætna*, there is an inaccuracy of the same kind. After several magnificent images, the poet concludes with representing the mountain as "belching up its bowels with a groan;" which, by likening the mountain to a sick or drunken person, degrades the majesty of the description.

Such instances show how much the sublime depends upon a just selection of circumstances; and with how great care every circumstance must be avoided, which, by bordering in the least upon the mean, or even upon the gay or trifling, alters the tone of the emotion.

If it shall now be inquired, what are the proper sources of the sublime, we answer, that they are to be found every where in nature. It is not by hunting after tropes, and figures, and rhetorical assistance, that we can expect to produce it; for it stands clear, for the most part, of these labored refinements of art. It must come unsought, if it comes at all; and be the natural offspring of a strong imagination.

What is commonly called the sublime style, is, for the most part, a very bad one; and has no relation, whatever, to the real sublime. Persons are apt to imagine, that magnificent words, accumulated epithets, and a certain swelling kind of expression, by rising above what is usual or vulgar, contributes to, or even forms the sublime: but nothing, in reality, is more false. In genuine instances of sublime writing, nothing of this kind appears. "God said, let there be light; and there was light." This is striking and

Repeat the passage. By whom is this idea rendered burlesque and ridiculous; and in what way? What inaccuracy of the same kind is found in Virgil's description of mount *Ætna*? What do such instances show? Where are the proper sources of the sublime to be found; and how is this illustrated? Of what is commonly called a sublime style, what is observed? What are writers apt to imagine; why is this false, and what illustration follows? In all good writing, where does the sublime, in general, lie; and what follows?

sublime. But put it into what is commonly called the sublime style : " The Sovereign Arbiter of nature, by the potent energy of a single word, commanded the light to exist ;" and, as has been well observed, the style indeed is raised, but the thought is fallen. In general it may be observed, that, in all good writing, the sublime lies in the thought, not in the expression ; and when the thought is truly noble, it will, for the most part, clothe itself in a native dignity of language.

The faults opposite to the sublime are chiefly two : the frigid and the bombast. The frigid consists, in degrading an object or sentiment, which is sublime in itself, by mean conception of it ; or by a weak, low, and childish description of it. This betrays entire absence, or at least, great poverty of genius. Of this there are abundance of examples, and these commented upon with much humor, in the *Treatise on the Art of Sinking*, by Dean Swift. The bombast lies, in forcing an ordinary or trivial object out of its rank, and endeavoring to raise it into the sublime ; or, in attempting to exalt a sublime object beyond all natural and reasonable bounds. Into this error, which is but too common, writers of genius may sometimes fall, by unluckily losing sight of the true point of the sublime. This is also called fustian or rant ; and Dryden and Lee, in their tragedies, abound with it.

We have treated thus fully of the sublime, because it is so capital an excellency in fine writing, and because clear and precise ideas on this head, are seldom to be met with in critical writers.

What are the faults opposite to the sublime ? In what does the frigid consist ; and what does it betray ? Of these what is remarked ? In what does the bombast lie ? How may writers of genius sometimes fall into this error ? What is this also called ; and who abound with it ? Why have we treated thus fully of the sublime ?

ANALYSIS.

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| 1. The foundation of the sublime. | B. Strength. |
| 2. Instances of sublime writing. | 4. The sources of the sublime. |
| A. The Sacred Scriptures. | 5. The nature of a sublime emotion. |
| B. Homer's poems. | 6. A sublime style. |
| C. The works of Ossian. | 7. Opposites to the sublime. |
| D. Milton's poems. | A. Frigid style. |
| 3. Essentials to the sublime. | B. Bombastic style. |
| A. Conciseness and simplicity. | |

LECTURE V.

BEAUTY AND OTHER PLEASURES OF TASTE

BEAUTY, next to sublimity, affords, beyond doubt, the highest pleasure to the imagination. The emotion which it raises, may be easily distinguished from that of sublimity. It is of a calmer kind; more gentle and soothing; does not elevate the mind so much, but produces an agreeable serenity. Sublimity raises a feeling, too violent to be lasting; the pleasure arising from beauty admits of longer continuance. It extends, also, to a much greater variety of objects than sublimity; to a variety indeed so great, that the feelings which beautiful objects produce, differ considerably, not in degree only, but also in kind, from one another. Hence, no word in the language is used with less discrimination than beauty. It is applied to almost every external object that pleases the eye or the ear; to a great number of the graces of writing; to many dispositions of the mind; and, even to several objects of mere abstract science. We talk currently of a beautiful tree or flower; a beautiful poem; a beautiful character; and, a beautiful theorem in mathematics.

Hence, we may easily perceive, that among so great a variety of objects, to find out some one quality in which they all agree, and which is the foundation of that agreeable sensation which they all raise, must be a very difficult, if not a vain attempt. Hypotheses, however, have been framed by ingenious men, for ascertaining the fundamental quality of beauty in all objects. In particular, uniformity amidst variety, has been insisted on as the fundamental quality. This, however, will not apply to color or motion; nor will it apply to all figured objects, since some please which have very little variety, and others, which are various to a degree

How may the emotion which beauty raises, be distinguished from that of sublimity? Of the variety of objects to which beauty extends, what is remarked? Hence, to what is it applied; and of what do we currently talk? What must, consequently, among so great a variety of objects, be a very difficult task? For what have hypotheses been framed; and what has been insisted on, as its fundamental quality? To what, however, will not this apply; and why?

of intricacy. Laying systems, therefore, aside, we shall give an enumeration of several of those classes of objects in which beauty most remarkably appears; and point out, as far as possible, the separate principles of beauty in each of them.

Color affords, perhaps, the simplest instance of beauty. Here, neither variety, nor uniformity, nor any other assignable principle, can be considered as its foundation. We can refer it to no other cause but the structure of the eye, which determines us to receive certain modifications of the rays of light with more pleasure than others. Association of ideas, it is probable, however, has some influence. Green, for instance, may appear more beautiful, by being connected in our ideas with rural scenes and prospects; white, with innocence; blue, with the serenity of the sky. Independent of associations of this kind, all that we can farther observe respecting colors is, that those chosen for beauty are, generally, delicate, rather than glaring. Such are the feathers of several kinds of birds, the leaves of flowers, and the fine variation of colors exhibited by the sky at the rising and setting of the sun.

From color we proceed to figure, which opens to us forms of beauty more complex and diversified. Regularity first occurs to be noticed as a source of beauty. By a regular figure, is meant, one which we perceive to be formed according to some certain rule, and not left arbitrary or loose in the construction of its parts. Thus a circle, a square, or a triangle, pleases the eye, by its regularity, as a beautiful figure: yet a certain graceful variety is perceived to be a much more powerful principle of beauty. Regularity appears beautiful to us, chiefly, if not solely, because it suggests the ideas of fitness, propriety, and use, which have always a more intimate connection with orderly and proportionate forms, than with those which appear not constructed according to any certain rule. Nature, who is, doubtless, the most

Laying systems, therefore, aside, what is proposed to be done? What, perhaps, affords the simplest instance of beauty; and of it, what is observed? What, perhaps, has some influence; and what illustrations are given? Independent of such associations, what only can we farther observe; and what instances are mentioned? From color, to what do we proceed; and of its beauty what is observed? What first occurs to be noticed as a source of beauty; by it what is meant; and what are the examples? Why does regularity appear beautiful; and of those qualities what is remarked? From the course that nature pursues in this respect, what illustration is given?

graceful artist, hath, in all her ornamental works, pursued variety with an apparent neglect of regularity. Cabinets, doors, and windows, are made after a regular form, in cubes and parallelograms, with exact proportion of parts, and by being so formed they please the eye: for this good reason, that, being works of use, they are, by such figures, the better suited to the ends for which they were designed. But plants, flowers, and leaves, are full of variety and diversity. A straight canal is an insipid figure, in comparison of the meanders of rivers. Cones and pyramids are beautiful; but trees growing in their natural wildness, are infinitely more beautiful than when trimmed into pyramids and cones. The apartments of a house must be regular in their disposition, for the convenience of its inhabitants; but a garden which is designed merely for beauty, would be extremely disgusting, if it had as much uniformity and order in its parts as a dwelling-house.

Motion furnishes another source of beauty, distinct from figure. Motion, of itself, is pleasing; and bodies in motion, are universally preferred to those at rest. It is, however, gentle motion only, that belongs to the beautiful; for when it is very swift, or very forcible, such as that of a torrent, it partakes of the sublime. The motion of a bird gliding through the air, is extremely beautiful; but the swiftness with which lightning darts through the heavens, is magnificent and astonishing. And here, it is proper to observe, that the sensations of sublime and beautiful, are not always distinguished by very distant boundaries; but are capable, in many instances, of approaching towards each other. Thus, a smooth running stream, is one of the most beautiful objects in nature: as it swells gradually into a great river, the beautiful, by degrees, is lost in the sublime. A young tree is a beautiful object; a spreading ancient oak, is a venerable and grand one. The calmness of a fine morning is beautiful; the universal stillness of the evening is highly sublime. But to return to the beauty of motion; it will

How are cabinets, doors, and windows, made; and why do they please? But what are full of diversity and variety? How is this subject farther illustrated from a straight canal, cones, and pyramids, the apartments of a house, and a garden? What furnishes another source of beauty, distinct from figure; and of it, what is remarked? What motion, only, belongs to the beautiful; and why? How is this remark illustrated? Here, what is it proper to observe; and what illustrations follow? But to return to the beauty of motion, what will generally hold true; and what instance is mentioned.

be found to hold, very generally, that motion in a straight line is not so beautiful as in a waving direction ; and motion upwards is also, generally, more agreeable than motion downwards. The easy-curling motion of flame and smoke, is an object singularly agreeable. Mr. Hogarth observes, very ingeniously, that all the common and necessary motions for the business of life, are performed by men in straight or plain lines ; but that all the graceful and ornamental movements are made in waving lines—an observation worthy of the attention of those who study the grace of gesture and action.

Though color, figure, and motion, are separate principles of beauty ; yet in many beautiful objects they all meet, and render the beauty both greater and more complex. Thus, in flowers, trees, and animals, we are entertained, at once, with the delicacy of the color, with the gracefulness of the figure, and sometimes also with the motion of the object. Perhaps the most complete assemblage of beautiful objects that can any where be found, is presented by a rich natural landscape, where there is a sufficient variety of objects—fields in verdure, scattered trees and flowers, running water, and animals grazing. If to these be joined some of the productions of art, which suit such a scene ; as a bridge with arches over a river, smoke rising from cottages in the midst of trees, and the distant view of a fine building seen by the rising sun ; we then enjoy, in the highest perfection, that gay, cheerful, and placid sensation which characterizes beauty.

The beauty of the human countenance is more complex than any that we have yet considered. It includes the beauty of color, arising from the delicate shades of the complexion ; and the beauty of figure, arising from the lines which form the different features of the face. But the chief beauty of the countenance depends upon a mysterious expression, which it conveys, of the qualities of the mind ; of good sense, or good humor ; of sprightliness, candor, benevo-

What has Mr. Hogarth very ingeniously observed ; and of this observation what is remarked ? When color, figure, and motion, all meet in the same object, what is their effect ? Thus, in flowers, trees, and animals, with what are we entertained at the same time ? By what is the most complete assemblage of beautiful objects that can any where be found, presented ; and how may its beauty be rendered perfect ? Of the beauty of the human countenance what is remarked ; and what does it include ? But upon what does its chief beauty depend ?

lence, sensibility, or other amiable dispositions. How it comes to pass that a certain conformation of features, is connected in our idea with certain moral qualities, belongs not to us now to inquire ; but the fact is certain, that what gives the human countenance its most distinguishing beauty, is what is called its expression ; or an image, which it is conceived to show of internal moral dispositions.

It may also be observed, that there are certain qualities of the mind, which, whether expressed in the countenance, or by words, or by actions, always raise in us a feeling similar to that of beauty. There are two great classes of moral qualities ; one is of the high and the grave virtues, which require extraordinary efforts, and turn upon dangers and sufferings ; as heroism, magnanimity, contempt of pleasures, and contempt of death. These excite, in the spectator, an emotion of sublimity and grandeur. The other class is chiefly of the social virtues, and such as are of a softer and gentler kind ; as compassion, mildness, friendship, and generosity. These excite, in the beholder, a sensation of pleasure, so nearly allied to that excited by beautiful external objects, that, though of a more dignified nature, it may, without impropriety, be classed under the same head.

Having mentioned so many different species of beauty, it now only remains to take notice of beauty as it is applied to writing or discourse. In its proper and appropriate sense, beauty of writing characterizes a particular manner, and signifies a certain grace and amenity in the turn either of style or sentiment, for which some authors have been peculiarly distinguished. In this sense, it denotes a manner neither remarkably sublime, nor vehemently passionate, nor uncommonly sparkling ; but such as raises in the reader an emotion of the gentle, placid kind, similar to that which is raised by the contemplation of beautiful objects in nature ; which neither lifts the mind very high, nor agitates it very much, but diffuses over the imagination an agreeable and pleasing serenity. Mr. Addison is a writer altogether of this character ; and is one of the most proper examples that

What belongs not to us now to inquire ; but what is certain ? Of certain qualities of the mind, what may also be observed ? What are the two great classes of moral qualities ; and what emotion do they respectively excite ? Having mentioned so many species of beauty, what only remains to be noticed ? In its proper and appropriate sense, what does beauty of writing signify ; and in this sense what manner does it denote ? Who are writers of this character ; and what is remarked of them ?

can be given of it. Fenelon, the author of the *Adventures of Telemachus*, may be given as another example. Virgil, too, though very capable of rising on occasions into the sublime, yet, in his general manner, is distinguished by the character of beauty and grace, rather than of sublimity. Among orators, Cicero has more of the beautiful than Demosthenes, whose genius led him wholly towards vehemence and strength.

Thus much it is necessary to have said upon the subject of beauty; since, next to sublimity, it is the most copious source of the pleasures of taste. But it is not by appearing under the forms of the sublime or beautiful only, that objects delight the imagination. They likewise derive their power of giving it pleasure from several other principles.

Novelty, for instance, has been mentioned by Mr. Addison, and by every other writer on this subject. An object which has no merit to recommend it, except its being uncommon or new, by means of this quality alone, produces in the mind a vivid and an agreeable emotion. Hence, that passion of curiosity which prevails so generally among mankind. Objects and ideas which have been long familiar, make too faint an impression to give an agreeable exercise to our faculties. New and strange objects rouse the mind from its dormant state, by giving it a sudden and pleasing impulse. Hence, in a great measure, the entertainment afforded us by fiction and romance. The emotion raised by novelty is of a more lively and pungent nature, than that produced by beauty; but much shorter in its continuance. For, if the object has in itself no charms to hold our attention, the shining gloss thrown upon it by novelty soon wears off.

Besides novelty, imitation is another source of pleasure to taste. This gives rise to what Mr. Addison terms, the secondary pleasures of imagination; which form, doubtless, a very extensive class. For all imitation conveys some pleasure to the mind; not only the imitation of beautiful or

Why is it necessary to have said thus much upon beauty; but what follows? What has been mentioned by Mr. Addison, as affording pleasure to the imagination? An object of what sort will produce an agreeable emotion in the mind; and hence what passion prevails? Of objects and ideas that have been long familiar, what is remarked; what effect do new and strange objects produce; and hence what follows? Of the emotion raised by novelty, what is observed; and why? Besides novelty, what is another source of pleasure to taste? This gives rise to what; and why do they form a very extensive class.

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sublime objects, by recalling the original ideas of beauty or grandeur which such objects themselves exhibit ; but even objects which have neither beauty nor grandeur ; nay, some which are terrible or deformed, please us in a secondary, or represented view.

The pleasures of melody and harmony belong also to taste. There is no agreeable sensation we receive either from beauty or sublimity, but what is capable of being heightened by the power of musical sound. Hence the charm of poetical numbers, and even the more concealed and looser measure of prose. Wit, humor, and ridicule, likewise open a variety of pleasures to taste, quite distinct from any that has yet been considered.

At present it is not necessary to pursue the subject of the pleasures of taste any farther. We have opened some of the general principles ; it is time now to apply them to our chief subject. If the question be asked, to what class of those pleasures of taste which have been enumerated, that pleasure is to be referred which we receive from poetry, eloquence, or fine writing ; the answer is, not to any one, but to them all. This singular advantage writing and discourse possess, that they encompass so large and fruitful a field on all sides, and have power to exhibit in great perfection, not a single set of objects only, but almost the whole of those which give pleasure to taste and imagination ; whether that pleasure arise from sublimity, from beauty in its various forms, from moral sentiments, from novelty, from harmony, or from wit, humor, and ridicule. To whichever of these the peculiar bent of the person's taste lies, from some writer or other, he has it always in his power to receive the gratification of it.

It has been usual among critical writers, to treat of discourse as the chief of all the imitative arts. They compare it with painting and with sculpture, and, in many respects, prefer it justly to them. But it must be observed, that

How does it appear that the pleasures of melody and harmony belong also to taste ; and hence what follows ? Of wit, humor, and ridicule, what is remarked ? As we have now opened some of the principles of the pleasures of taste, what is it time to do ? If the question be asked to what class of those pleasures of taste which we have been enumerating is to be referred, the pleasure which we receive from poetry, &c., what answer is to be given ? What singular advantage do writing and discourse possess ? How has it been usual among critical writers to treat of discourse ; and to what do they compare it ? But what must be observed, and how is this illustrated ?

LECT. 5.] IMITATION AND DESCRIPTION. 43

imitation and description differ considerably in their nature from each other. Words have no natural resemblance to the ideas or objects which they are employed to signify; but a statue or a picture has a natural likeness to the original. Hence, to describe a thing is to tell what it is; but to imitate it, is to show what it is.

As far, however, as the poet introduces into his work persons really speaking, and by the words which he puts into their mouths, represents the conversation which they might be supposed to hold; so far his art may more accurately be called imitative; and this is the case in all dramatic compositions. But in narrative or descriptive works, it can, with no propriety, be called so. Who, for instance, would call Virgil's description of a tempest, in the first *Æniad*, an imitation of a storm! Should we hear of the imitation of a battle, we would naturally think of some mock fight, or representation of a battle on the stage, but would never apprehend that it meant one of Homer's descriptions in the *Iliad*. It must be admitted, at the same time, that imitation and description agree in their principal effect, of recalling, by external signs, the ideas of things which we do not see. But though in this they coincide, yet it should not be forgotten, that the terms themselves are not synonymous—that they impart different means for effecting the same end; and, of course, make different impressions on the mind.

Hence, what is the difference between describing a thing, and telling what it is? How far may the poet's art be said to be imitative; and in what compositions is this the case? How is the remark illustrated, that it is not so in descriptive works; but what must, at the same time, be admitted? But though in this they coincide, yet what should not be forgotten?

ANALYSIS.

1. Beauty.

- A. The nature of beauty.
- B. Hypotheses of beauty.
- C. The beauty of colors.
- D. The beauty of figures.
 - a. Hogarth's analysis.
- E. The beauty of motion.
- F. Color, figure, and motion, united.

G. The beauty of the human countenance.

H. Moral beauty.

I. Beauty of design.

K. Beauty of writing.

- 2. Novelty.
- 3. Imitation.
- 4. Melody and harmony.
- 5. Writing and discourse.

LECTURE VI.

RISE AND PROGRESS OF LANGUAGE.

LANGUAGE, which is the foundation of all eloquence, signifies, in general, the expression of our ideas by certain articulate sounds, which are used as the signs of those ideas. The connection between words and ideas may, in general, be considered as arbitrary and conventional, owing to the agreement of men among themselves; the clear proof of which is, that different nations have different languages, or a different set of articulate sounds, which they have chosen for communicating their ideas.

This artificial method of communicating thought, we now behold carried to the highest perfection. Language is become a vehicle by which the most delicate and refined emotions of one mind can be transmitted, or transfused into another. Not only are names given to all objects around us, by which means an easy and speedy intercourse is carried on for providing the necessaries of life, but all the relations and differences among these objects are minutely marked, the invisible sentiments of the mind are described, the most abstract notions and conceptions are rendered intelligible; and all the ideas which science can discover, or imagination create, are known by their proper names. Nay, language has been carried so far as to be made an instrument of the most refined luxury. Not resting in mere perspicuity, we require ornament also; not satisfied with having the conceptions of others made known to us, we make a farther demand, to have them so decked and adorned as to entertain our fancy; and this demand it is found very possible to gratify.

But in order to form an adequate idea of the origin of lan-

What does language signify? Why may the connection between words and ideas be considered arbitrary and conventional; and of this, what is a clear proof? In what state do we now behold this artificial method of communication; and what is language become? How is this remark illustrated? How does it appear that language has been carried so far as to be made an instrument of the most refined luxury? But in order to form an adequate idea of the origin of language, what is necessary; and at that time, in what condition were mankind?

guage, it is necessary to contemplate the circumstances of mankind in their earliest and rudest state. They were then a wandering, scattered race; no society among them except families; and the family society, too, very imperfect, as their method of living by hunting and pasturage must have separated them frequently from one another. In this situation, when so much divided, and their intercourse so rare, how could any one set of sounds, or words, be generally agreed on as the signs of their ideas? Supposing that a few, whom chance or necessity threw together, agreed, by some means, upon certain signs; yet by what authority could these be propagated among other tribes, or families, so as to spread and grow up into a language? One would think, that in order for any language to fix and extend itself, men must have been previously gathered together in considerable numbers; society must have been already far advanced; and yet, on the other hand, there seems to have been an absolute necessity for speech, previous to the formation of society. For by what bond could any multitude of men be kept together, or be made to join in the prosecution of any common interest, until, by the assistance of speech, they could communicate their wants and intentions to one another? So that, either how society could subsist previous to language, or how words could rise into a language, previous to the formation of society, seem to be points attended with equal difficulty. And when we consider farther, that curious analogy which prevails in the construction of almost all languages, and that deep and subtle logic on which they are founded, difficulties increase so much upon us, on all hands, that there seems to be no small reason for referring the origin of all languages to divine teaching, or inspiration. But supposing language to have had a divine origin, we cannot, however, suppose, that a perfect system of it was at once given to man. It is much more natural to think, that God taught our first parents such language only, as suited their present occasions; leaving them, as he did in other things, to enlarge and improve it as their future necessities should

In this situation, what would be impossible; and what supposition follows? In order for any language to fix and extend itself, what must have been done; and yet, on the other hand, what is remarked; and why? What points, consequently, seem to be attended with equal difficulty? What farther consideration induces us to refer the origin of all languages to divine inspiration? But, allowing that language had a divine origin, what can we not suppose; and what is much more natural?

require. Consequently, those first rudiments of speech must have been poor and narrow; and we are at full liberty to inquire in what manner, and by what steps, language advanced to the state in which we now find it.

If we should suppose a period before any words were invented or known, it is clear that men could have no other method of communicating, to others, what they felt, than by the cries of passion, accompanied with such motions and gestures as were farther expressive of passion. These, indeed, are the only signs which nature teaches all men, and which are understood by all. One who saw another going into some place where he himself had been frightened, or exposed to danger, and who sought to warn his neighbor of the danger, could contrive no other method of doing so, than by uttering those cries, and making those gestures, which are the signs of fear: just as two men, at this day, would endeavor to make themselves be understood by each other, who should be thrown together on a desolate island, ignorant of each other's language. Those exclamations, therefore, called by grammarians, interjections, uttered in a strong and passionate manner, were, beyond doubt, the first elements or beginnings of speech.

When more enlarged communications became necessary, and names began to be assigned to objects, in what manner can we suppose men to have proceeded in this application of names, or invention of words? Doubtless, by imitating, as much as they could, the nature of the object which they named, by the sound of the name which they gave to it. As a painter, who would represent grass, must employ green color; so in the infancy of language, one giving a name to any thing harsh or boisterous, would, of course, employ a harsh or boisterous sound. He could not do otherwise, if he meant to excite in the hearer the idea of that thing which he sought to name. To suppose words invented, or names given to things, in a manner purely arbitrary, is to suppose

What must, consequently, have been the state of those first rudiments of speech; and what follows? If we suppose a period before words were invented, what method only, would men have for communicating what they felt to others; and why? How is this remark illustrated? What instance is given; and what, consequently, were the first elements of speech? When more enlarged communications became necessary, in what manner did men proceed in their application of names; and how is this illustrated? Under what circumstances could he not do otherwise? What would be to suppose an effect without a cause; and for what reason?

an effect without a cause. There must have always been some motive that led to the assigning of one name rather than another; and we can conceive no motive which would more generally operate upon men in their first efforts towards language, than a desire to paint by speech, the objects which they named, in a manner more or less complete, according as it was in the power of the human voice to effect this imitation.

Wherever objects were to be named, in which sound, noise, or motion, were concerned, the imitation by words was abundantly obvious. Nothing was more natural, than to imitate, by the sound of the voice, the quality of the sound or noise which any external object made; and to form its name accordingly. Thus, in all languages, we find a multitude of words that are evidently constructed upon this principle. A certain bird is termed the cuckoo, from the sound which it emits. When one sort of wind is said to *whistle*, and another to *roar*; when a serpent is said to *hiss*, a fly to *buz*, and falling timber to *crash*; when a stream is said to *flow*, and hail to *rattle*; the resemblance between the word and the thing signified, is plainly discernable. But in the names of objects which address the sight only, where neither noise nor motion is concerned, and still more in the terms appropriated to moral ideas, this analogy appears to fail. Yet many learned men have been of opinion, that though in such cases it becomes more obscure, it is not altogether lost; but that throughout the radical words of all languages, there may be traced some correspondence with the object signified. With regard to moral and intellectual ideas, they remark, that in every language, the terms significant of them, are derived from the names of sensible objects to which they are conceived to be analogous; and with regard to sensible objects pertaining merely to sight, they remark, that their most distinguishing qualities have certain radical sounds appropriated to the expression of them, in a great variety of languages.

This principle, however, of a natural relation between

Where was the imitation by words abundantly obvious; and thus, in all languages, what do we find? What instances are mentioned, illustrative of this remark? But where does this analogy appear to fail; yet many learned men have been of what opinion? With regard to moral and intellectual ideas, and with regard to sensible objects pertaining merely to sight, what do they remark? When only can this principle be applied to language?

words and objects, can only be applied to language in its most simple and primitive state. Though in every tongue some remains of it can be traced, it were utterly vain to search for it throughout the whole construction of any modern language. As the multitude of terms increase in every nation, and the immense field of language is filled up, words, by a thousand fanciful and irregular methods of derivation and composition, deviate widely from the primitive character of their roots, and lose all resemblance in sound to the thing signified. This is the present state of language. Words, as we now employ them, taken in the general, may be considered as symbols, not as imitations; as arbitrary or instituted, not natural signs of ideas. But there can be no doubt, that language, the nearer we remount to its rise among men, will be found to partake more of a natural expression.

A second character of language, in its early state, is drawn from the manner in which words were at first pronounced. Interjections, it has been shown, or passionate exclamations, were the first elements of speech. Men labored to communicate their feelings to one another, by those expressive cries and gestures which nature taught them. After words, or names of objects, began to be introduced, this mode of speaking by natural signs, could not be all at once disused. For language, in its infancy must have been extremely barren; and there doubtless was a period among all rude nations, when conversation was carried on by a very few words, intermixed with many exclamations and earnest gestures. The small stock of words which men as yet possessed, rendered these helps absolutely necessary for explaining their conceptions; and rude uncultivated men, not having always at hand even the few words which they knew, would naturally labor to make themselves understood, by varying their tones of voice, and accompanying their tones with the most significant gesticulations they could make.

Though in every tongue some remains of it can be traced, yet what were utterly vain; and why? As this is the present state of language, how may words, as we now employ them, be considered; but of what can there be no doubt? Whence is a second character of language, in its early state, drawn? What were the first elements of speech; and why were they? After words began to be introduced, why could not this mode of speaking be, at once, disused? What rendered these helps absolutely necessary; and what follows?

To this manner of speaking, necessity first gave rise. But we must observe, that after this necessity had, in a great measure, ceased, by language becoming, in process of time, more extensive and copious, the ancient manner of speech still subsisted among many nations; and what had arisen from necessity, continued to be used for ornament. In the Greek and Roman languages, a musical and gesticulating pronunciation was retained in a very high degree. Without having attended to this, we shall be at a loss to understand several passages of the classics, which relate to the public speaking and theatrical entertainments of the ancients. Our modern pronunciation would have appeared to them a lifeless monotony. The declamation of their orators, and the pronunciation of their actors upon the stage, approached to the nature of recitative in music; was capable of being marked in notes, and supported with instruments; as several learned men have fully proved.

The case was parallel with regard to gesture; for strong tones and animated gestures, we may observe, always go together. Action is treated of by all the ancient critics, as the chief quality in every public speaker. The action both, of the orators and players in Greece and Rome, was far more vehement than what we are accustomed to now. To us, Roscius would have seemed a madman. Gesture was of such consequence upon the ancient stage, that on some occasions, the speaking and the acting part were divided; which, according to our ideas, would form a strange exhibition: one player spoke the words in the proper tones, while another performed the corresponding motions and gestures. We learn from Cicero, that it was a contest between him and Roscius, whether he could express a sentiment in a greater variety of phrases, or Roscius in a greater variety of intelligible significant gestures. At last, gesture engrossed the stage wholly; for, under the reigns of

To this manner of speaking what gave rise; yet what must be observed? Of it in the Greek and Roman languages what is remarked; and without having attended to this, to understand what shall we be at a loss? How would our modern pronunciation have appeared to them; and of the declamation of their orators, and the pronunciation of their actors, what is observed? Why was the case parallel with regard to gesture; and how is action treated of by all the ancient critics? Of the action of the players and orators of Greece and Rome, what is remarked; and how would Roscius have seemed to us? From the importance of gesture upon the ancient stage, what practice prevailed; and how was it conducted? On this subject, what do we learn from Cicero?

Augustus and Tiberius, the favorite entertainment of the public was the pantomime, which was carried on entirely by mute gesticulation. The people were moved, and wept at it as much as at tragedies; and the passion for it became so strong, that laws were made, for restraining the senators from studying the pantomime art. Now, though in declamations and theatrical exhibitions, both tone and gesture were, doubtless, carried much farther than in common discourse; yet public speaking of any kind, must, in every country, bear some proportion to the manner which is used in conversation; and such public entertainments as have now been mentioned, could never have been relished by a nation, whose tones and gestures, in discourse, were as languid as ours.

We are apt, upon a superficial view, to imagine, that those modes of expression which are called figures of speech, are among the chief refinements of speech, not invented till after language had advanced to its later periods, and mankind were brought into a polished state; and that, then, they were devised by orators and rhetoricians: but the truth is directly the contrary. Mankind never employed so many figures of speech, as when they had hardly any words for expressing their meaning.

For, first, the want of proper names for every object, obliged them to use one name for many; and, of course, to express themselves by comparisons, metaphors, allusions, and all those substituted forms of speech which render language figurative. Next, as the objects with which they were most conversant, were the sensible material objects around them, names would be given to those objects long before words were invented for signifying the dispositions of the mind, or any sort of moral and intellectual ideas. Hence, the early language of men being entirely made up of words descriptive of sensible objects, it necessarily became extremely metaphorical. For, to signify any desire or passion, or any act or feeling of the mind, they had no precise expression.

At last, to what extent did it engross the stage; from what does this appear; and how were the people affected by it? What remark follows, yet, to what must public speaking, in every country, bear some resemblance; and by whom could not such public entertainments, as have now been mentioned, be relished? Of those modes of expression called figures of speech, what are we apt to imagine; but how does it appear that the truth is directly the contrary? What are the two reasons for this? Hence, of the early languages of men what is observed; and why was this the case?

which was appropriated to that purpose, but were under the necessity of painting the passion or emotion which they felt, by allusion to those sensible objects which had most relation to it, and which could render it, in some degree, visible to others.

But it was not necessity alone that gave rise to this figured style. In the infancy of all societies, men are much under the dominion of imagination and passion. They live scattered and dispersed; they are unacquainted with the course of things; they are every day meeting with new and strange objects. Fear and surprise, wonder and astonishment, are their most frequent passions. Their language will necessarily be affected by this character of their minds. They will be disposed to paint every thing in the strongest and most glowing colors. Even the manner in which the first tribes of men uttered their words, would have considerable influence on their style. Wherever strong exclamations, tones, and gestures, are connected with conversation, the imagination is always more exercised; a greater effort of fancy and passion is excited. Consequently, the fancy, kept awake, and rendered more sprightly by this mode of utterance, operates upon style, and renders it more lively.

These reasonings are confirmed by undoubted facts. The style of all the most early languages, among nations who are in the first and rude periods of society, is found, without exception, to be full of figures—hyperbolical and picturesque in a high degree. We have a striking instance of this in the American languages, which are known, by the most authentic accounts, to be figurative to excess. Another remarkable instance, is the style of the Old Testament, which is carried on by constant allusions to sensible objects.

But as language, in its progress, began to grow more copious, it gradually lost that figurative style, which was its original character. The vehement manner of speaking by tones and gestures, became less universal. In place of poets, philosophers became the instructors of men; and in their reasonings on all subjects, introduced that plain and simple style of composition, which we now call prose. The ancient

How does it appear that it was not necessity alone that gave rise to this figured style? Why would the manner in which men pronounced their words, have considerable influence upon their style? How do these reasonings appear to be confirmed by facts; and where have we instances of this? But as language, in its progress, began to grow more copious, what consequences followed?

metaphorical and poetical dress of language, was now laid aside from the intercourse of men, and reserved for those occasions only, on which ornament was professedly studied.

ANALYSIS.

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|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Language. | 2. Pronunciation. |
| A. Its present state. | A. Inflections. |
| B. Its origin. | B. Gestures. |
| C. The earliest method of communicating thoughts. | 3. The character of language changed. |
| D. The principle upon which language was formed. | 4. The style of early languages. |
| a. When this principle is obvious. | A. The employment of figures. |
| b. When it seems to fail. | a. Confirmation of these reasonings. |
| | B. The origin of prose. |

LECTURE VII.

RISE AND PROGRESS OF LANGUAGE, AND
OF WRITING.

WHEN we attend to the order in which words are arranged in a sentence, we find a very remarkable difference between the ancient and modern tongues. The consideration of this will serve to unfold farther the genius of language, and to show the causes of those alterations which it has undergone in the progress of society.

In order to conceive, distinctly, the nature of this alteration, we must go back, as before, to the earliest period of language. Let us figure to ourselves a savage, who beholds some object, such as fruit, which raises his desire, and who requests another to give it to him. Supposing him to be unacquainted with words, he would, in that case, labor to make himself be understood, by pointing earnestly at the object which he desired, and uttering, at the same time, a passionate cry. Supposing him to have acquired words, the first word which he uttered would, of course, be the name of that object. He would not express himself according to our English order of construction, "give me fruit;" but according to the Latin order, "fruit give me;" for this plain reason, that his attention was wholly directed towards fruit, the desired object. This was the exciting idea; the object which moved him to speak; and, of course, would be the first named. Such an arrangement is precisely putting into words the gesture which nature taught the savage to make, before he was acquainted with words; and, therefore, it may be depended upon as certain, that he would fall most readily into this arrangement. Hence, we might conclude, *a priori*, that this would be the order in which words were most commonly arranged at the beginnings of language; and, accord-

When we attend to the order in which words are arranged in a sentence, what do we perceive; and what will the consideration of this, do? How shall we conceive distinctly the nature of this alteration; and what must we figure to ourselves? If unacquainted with words, how would he labor to make himself understood? Suppose him to have acquired words, what course would he pursue; and why? Of such an arrangement, what is remarked; and, therefore, what follows? Hence, what might we conclude; and in what tongues were words arranged in this order?

ingly, we find, in fact, that in this order, words are arranged in most of the ancient tongues; as in the Greek and Latin; and it is said, also, in the Russian, the Slavonic, the Gaelic, and several of the American tongues.

All the modern languages of Europe have adopted a different arrangement from the ancient. In their prose compositions, very little variety is admitted in the collocation of words; they are chiefly fixed to one order, which may be called the order of the understanding. They place first in the sentence, the person, or thing, which speaks or acts; next, its action; and lastly, the object of its action. So that the ideas are made to succeed to one another, not according to the degree of importance which the several objects carry in the imagination, but according to the order of nature and of time.

An English writer, paying a compliment to a great man, would say thus: "It is impossible for me to pass over in silence such remarkable mildness, such singular and unheard of clemency, and such unusual moderation in the exercise of supreme power." Here we have first presented to us, the person who speaks; next, what that person is to do, "*impossible for him to pass over in silence*;" and, lastly, the object which moves him so to do, "*the mildness, clemency, and moderation of his patron*." Cicero, from whom these words are translated, just reverses this order; beginning with the object, placing that first which was the exciting idea in the speaker's mind, and ending with the speaker and his action. "*Tantum mansuetudinem, tam inusitatem inauditamque clementiam, tantumque in summa potestate rerum omnium modum, tacitus nullo modo præterire possum*." Here, it must be observed, that the Latin order is more animated; the English more clear and distinct.

In poetry, where we are supposed to rise above the ordinary style, and to speak the language of fancy and passion, our arrangement is not altogether so limited; but greater liberty is allowed for transposition and inversion. Even there, however, that liberty is confined within narrow

Of the course pursued by all the modern languages of Europe, in their prose compositions, what is observed; and what is this order called? How do they proceed; so that what follows? An English writer, paying a compliment to a great man, would say what; and here, what have we presented to us? What order does Cicero pursue; and here what must be observed? Where is greater liberty allowed for transposition and inversion; but there, of that liberty, what is observed?

bounds, in comparison of the ancient languages. In this respect, the different modern tongues vary from each other. The Italian retains the most of the ancient transpositive character; the English, the next; and the French, the least of all.

It is proper, however, to observe, that there is one circumstance in the structure of all the modern tongues, which, of necessity, limits their arrangement, in a great measure, to one fixed and determined train. We have disused those differences of termination, which, in the Greek and Latin, distinguished the several cases of nouns and tenses of verbs; and which, thereby, pointed out the mutual relation of the several words in a sentence to one another, though the related words were disjoined, and placed in different parts of the sentence. One obvious effect of this is, that we have now, for the most part, no way left us to show the close relation of any two words to each other in meaning, but by placing them close to one another in the period. It was by means of the contrivance of varying the termination of nouns and verbs, and thereby pointing out the concordance and the government of the words in a sentence, that the ancients enjoyed so much liberty of transposition, and could marshal and arrange their words in any way that gratified the imagination, or pleased the ear. But when language came to be modelled by the northern nations, who overran the empire, they dropped the cases of nouns, and the different terminations of verbs, with the more ease, because they placed no great value upon the advantages arising from such a structure of language. They were attentive only to clearness, and copiousness of expression.

Having finished the account of the progress of speech, the account of the progress of writing next demands our notice.

Writing is evidently an improvement upon speech, and therefore must have been posterior to it in the order of time

How do different modern languages vary in this respect? What circumstance, however, must we observe, necessarily limits the structure of all the modern tongues, to one fixed and determined train; and what is one obvious effect of this? What advantage did the ancients derive from varying the terminations of nouns and verbs? But when, and why, were these cases of nouns and terminations of verbs dropped; and to what only, were they attentive? Having finished the account of the progress of speech, what next demands our attention? Upon what is writing evidently an improvement; and, therefore, what follows?

At first, men thought of nothing more than communicating their thoughts to one another, when present, by means of words, or sounds which they uttered. Afterwards they devised this farther method of mutual communication with each other, when absent, by means of characters presented to the eye, which we call writing.

Written characters are of two sorts: They are either signs for things, or signs for words. Of the former sort, signs of things, are the pictures, hieroglyphics, and symbols, employed by the ancient nations; of the latter sort, signs for words, are the alphabetical characters now employed by all Europeans.

Pictures were, doubtless, the first attempt towards writing. Imitation is so natural to man, that, in all ages, and among all nations, some methods have obtained, of copying or tracing the likeness of sensible objects. Those methods would soon be employed by men for giving some imperfect information to others, at a distance, of what had happened; or for preserving the memory of facts which they sought to record. Thus, to signify that one man had killed another, they drew the figure of one man stretched upon the earth, and of another standing by him with a deadly weapon in his hand. We find, in fact, that when America was first discovered, this was the only sort of writing known in the kingdom of Mexico.* It was, however, a very imperfect method of recording facts; since, by pictures, external events only could be delineated.

To supply, in some degree, this defect, there arose, in process of time, the invention of hieroglyphical characters, which may be considered as the second stage of the art of writing. Hieroglyphics consist in certain symbols, which are made to represent visible objects, on account of an

* Dr. Robertson, speaking of Mexican figures, says, "They represent things, not words. They exhibit images to the eye, not ideas to the understanding." Hist. of America, Book 7, p. 160.—Albany ed., 1822.

At first, of what only did men think; and what did they afterwards devise? Written characters are of what two sorts; and what are examples of each? What were the first attempts towards writing; and why was this the case? Thus, how would they signify that one man had killed another? Where do we find this to have been the only sort of writing known; and what is observed of it? In process of time, what invention arose to supply, in some degree, this defect, and how may it be considered? In what do hieroglyphics consist; and what examples are given?

analogy, or resemblance, which such symbols were supposed to bear to the objects themselves. Thus, an eye, was the hieroglyphical symbol of knowledge; a circle, which has neither beginning nor end, of eternity. Hieroglyphics, therefore, were a more refined and extensive species of painting. Pictures delineated the resemblance of external visible objects; hieroglyphics painted invisible objects, by analogies taken from the external world.

Among the Mexicans, were found some traces of hieroglyphical characters, intermixed with their historical pictures. But Egypt was the country where this sort of writing was most studied, and brought into a regular art. In these characters all the boasted wisdom of their priests was conveyed. According to the properties which they ascribe to animals, or the qualities with which they suppose natural objects to be endowed, they pitched upon them to be the emblems of moral objects; and employed them in their writings for that end. Thus, ingratitude was denominated by a viper; imprudence, by a fly; wisdom, by an ant; victory, by a hawk; and a dutiful child, by a stork. But, as many of those properties of objects which they assumed for the foundation of their hieroglyphics, were merely imaginary, and the allusions drawn from them forced and ambiguous, this sort of writing was extremely enigmatical, and confused in the highest degree; and must have been a very imperfect vehicle of knowledge of any kind.

From hieroglyphics mankind gradually advanced to simple arbitrary marks, which stood for objects, though without any resemblance or analogy to the object signified. Of this nature was the method of writing practised among the Peruvians. They used small cords of different colors; and by knots upon these, of different sizes, and variously arranged, they contrived signs for giving information, and communicating their thoughts to one another. The Chinese, to this day, use written characters of this nature. They have no

How do hieroglyphics and pictures compare with each other? Where do we find some traces of hieroglyphical characters; and where were they brought to a regular art? In these characters, all of whose knowledge was conveyed; and what course did they pursue? What illustrative examples are given? But why was this sort of writing enigmatical and confused; and what must it, consequently, have been? From hieroglyphics, to what did mankind gradually advance; and what method of writing was of this nature? How is this remark illustrated? Who, to this day, use written characters of this nature; and having no alphabet of letters, what course do they pursue?

alphabet of letters, or simple sounds, which compose their words; but every single character which they use in writing, is significant of an idea; it is a mark which stands for some one thing or object. The number of these characters must, consequently, be immense. It must correspond to the whole number of objects, or ideas, which they have occasion to express; that is, to the whole number of words which they employ in speech. They are said, indeed, to amount to seventy thousand. To become perfectly acquainted with them is the business of a whole life; which subjects learning, among them, to infinite disadvantage; and must have greatly retarded the progress of all science.

It is evident that the Chinese characters, are, like hieroglyphics, independent of language; and are signs of things, and not of words. For we are told that the Japanese, the Tonquinese, and the Corœans, who speak different languages from each other, and from the inhabitants of China, use, however, the same written characters with them, and thus correspond intelligibly with one another in writing, though ignorant of the language spoken in their respective countries. Our arithmetical figures, 1, 2, 3, 4, &c. are an example of this sort of writing. They have no dependence on words; each figure represents the number for which it stands; and, consequently, on being presented to the eye, is equally understood by all the nations who have agreed in the use of these figures.

The first step to remedy the imperfection, the ambiguity, and the tediousness of each of these methods of communication which have been mentioned, was the invention of an alphabet of syllables; which, probably, preceded the invention of an alphabet of letters, among some of the ancient nations; and which is said to be retained to this day in Æthiopia, and some countries of India. By fixing upon a particular mark, or character, for every syllable in the lan-

To what must the number of these characters, consequently, correspond; and how many of them are they said to have? Of the difficulty of becoming acquainted with them, what is remarked; to what does this subject learning; and what must have been the consequence? What evidence have we that the Chinese characters are, like hieroglyphics, independent of language? What example have we of this sort of writing; of them what is remarked, and what, consequently, follows? What was the first step to remedy the imperfection, &c., of each of these methods of communication; what did it, probably precede; and where is it said to be still retained? How was the number of characters necessary to be used in writing, much reduced; but, still, of them what is remarked?

guage, the number of characters necessary to be used in writing, was reduced within a much smaller compass than the number of words in the language. Still, however, the number of characters was great ; and must have continued to render both reading and writing very laborious arts. Till, at last, some happy genius arose, and tracing the sounds, made by the human voice, to their most simple elements, reduced them to a very few vowels and consonants ; and by affixing to each of these, the signs which we now call letters, taught men how, by their combinations, to put in writing all the different words, or combinations of sound, which they employed in speech.

To whom we are indebted for this sublime and refined discovery, does not appear. Concealed by the darkness of remote antiquity, the great inventor is deprived of those honors which would still be paid to his memory, by all the lovers of knowledge and learning. It appears from the books which Moses has written, that among the Jews, and probably among the Egyptians, letters had been invented prior to his age. The universal tradition among the ancients is, that they were first imported into Greece by Cadmus the Phœnician ; who, according to Sir Isaac Newton's system of chronology, was cotemporary with king David. As the Phœnicians are not known to have been the inventors of any art or science, the most probable and natural account of the origin of alphabetical characters is, that they took their rise in Egypt, the first civilized kingdom of which we have any authentic accounts, and the great source of arts and polity among the ancients. In that country, the favorite study of hieroglyphical characters, had directed much attention to the art of writing. Their hieroglyphics are known to have been intermixed with abbreviated symbols, and arbitrary marks ; whence, at last, they caught the idea of contriving marks, not for things merely, but for sounds. Accordingly, Plato expressly attributes the invention of letters to

At last, by some happy genius, what was effected ; and in effecting this, what course did he pursue ? Of the inventor of this sublime and refined discovery, what is remarked ; and what appears from the books of Moses ? What is the universal tradition among the ancients ; and with whom was he cotemporary ? As the Phœnicians are not known to have been the inventors of any art or science, what inference follows ? What remarks follow to justify this inference ? To whom does Plato expressly attribute the invention of them ; and who is he supposed to have been ?

Theuth, the Egyptian, who is supposed to have been the Hermes, or Mercury, of the Greeks.

The alphabet which Cadmus brought into Greece was imperfect, and is said to have contained only sixteen letters. The rest were afterwards added, according as signs for proper sounds were found to be wanting. It is curious to observe, that the letters which we use at this day, can be traced back to this very alphabet of Cadmus. The Roman alphabet, which obtains with us, is so plainly formed on the Greek, and the Greek characters have so remarkable a conformity with the Hebrew and the Phœnician, as amounts to a demonstration, that they were all derived originally from the same source.

The ancient order of writing was from the right hand to the left. This manner of writing obtained among the Assyrians, Phœnicians, Arabians, and Hebrews; and, from some very old inscriptions, appears to have obtained, also, among the Greeks. Afterwards, the Greeks adopted a new method, writing their lines alternately from the right to the left, and from the left to the right. The inscription on the famous Sigeian monument is a specimen of this mode of writing, which continued down to the days of Solon, the celebrated legislator of Athens. At length, the motion from the left hand to the right being found more natural and convenient, this order of writing was adopted throughout all the nations of Europe.

Writing was, for a long time, a kind of engraving. Pillars, and tables of stone, were first employed for this purpose, and afterwards plates of the softer metals, such as lead. In proportion as writing became more common, lighter and more portable substances were employed. The leaves, and the bark of certain trees, were used in some countries: and in others, tablets of wood, covered with a thin coat of soft wax, on which the impression was made with a stylus of iron. Parchment, made of the hides of animals, was an

How many letters did the alphabet of Cadmus contain; and how were the rest added? What is it curious to observe; and how is this remark illustrated? What was the ancient order of writing; and among whom did it obtain? What method succeeded; what is a specimen of it, and how long did it continue? At length, what order was adopted; and why? Writing was, for a long time, what; what were, at first, employed for this purpose; and what, afterwards? As writing became more common, what followed; and what illustrations are given? Of parchment, and of the invention of paper, what is observed?

invention of later times. Paper, on which we at present write, was not invented till the fourteenth century.

Having thus given some account of the two great arts, speech and writing, we shall close this subject with a few remarks on their comparative advantages. The advantages of writing over speech are, that it is a more extensive and more permanent method of communication. More extensive, as it is not confined within the narrow circle of those who hear us; but, by means of written characters, we can send our thoughts to the most distant regions of the earth: and more permanent, as it gives us the means of recording our sentiments for futurity, and of perfecting the instructive memory of past transactions. But, though these are great advantages of written language, yet we must not forget to observe, that spoken language has a great superiority over written, in point of energy and force. The voice of the living speaker makes a much stronger impression on the mind than can be made by the perusal of any writing. The tones of the voice, the looks and gestures, which accompany discourse, render it, when well arranged, infinitely more clear, and more expressive, than the most accurate writing: for tones, looks, and gestures, are natural interpreters of the sentiments of the mind. Hence, though writing may answer the purposes of instruction, yet all the great and high efforts of eloquence must be made by means of speech.

Having thus given some account of speech and writing, with what is this subject closed? What are the advantages of writing over speech; and how is this illustrated? What advantages has speech over writing; and what illustration follows?

ANALYSIS.

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Arrangement. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Origin of arrangement. B. Arrangement of ancient languages. C. Arrangement of modern languages. 2. Writing. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. signs of things. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Pictures. b. Hieroglyphics. c. Arbitrary marks. B. Signs for words. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Alphabet of syllables. b. Alphabetical characters. 3. Comparative advantages of speech and writing. |
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LECTURE VIII.

STRUCTURE OF LANGUAGE.

THE structure of language is extremely artificial ; and there are few sciences in which a deeper and more refined logic is employed, than in grammar. Superficial thinkers are apt to slight it, from an impression that it belongs to those rudiments of knowledge, which were inculcated upon us in our earliest youth. But what was then inculcated before we could comprehend its principles, must abundantly repay our study in maturer years ; and to the ignorance of it, must be attributed many of those fundamental defects which appear in writing.

It is not proposed, at present, to give any system, either of grammar in general, or of English grammar in particular. A minute discussion of the niceties of language would carry us too far from other objects, which demand our attention in this work. But we propose to give a general view of the chief principles relating to this subject ; and then to make some more particular remarks on the genius of the English language.

The essential parts of speech are the same in all languages. There must always be some words which denote the names of objects, or mark the subject of discourse ; other words, which denote the qualities of those objects, and express what we affirm concerning them ; and other words, which point out their connections, and relations. Hence, substantives, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, prepositions, and conjunctions, must necessarily be found in all languages. The common grammatical division of speech into eight parts ; nouns, pronouns, verbs, participles, adverbs, prepositions, interjections, and conjunctions, is not very logical, as might be easily shown ; as it comprehends, under the

Of the structure of language what is observed ? From what impression are superficial thinkers apt to slight it ; but of what was then inculcated, what is remarked ? Why is it not proposed, at present, to give any system of general or particular grammar ; but what is to be given ? From what does it appear that the essential parts of speech are the same in all languages ; and hence, what follows ? What is the common grammatical division ; what is observed of it, and why ?

general term of nouns, both substantives and adjectives, which are parts of speech generically and essentially distinct; while it makes a separate part of speech of participles, which are noother than verbal adjectives. Yet, as these are the terms to which our ears have been most familiarized, and, as an exact logical division is of no great consequence to our present purpose, it will be better to make use of these known terms than any other.

Substantive nouns are the foundation of all grammar, and may be considered as the most ancient part of speech. For when men had got beyond simple interjections, or exclamations of passion, and had begun to communicate their ideas to each other, they would be obliged to assign names to the objects by which they were surrounded. And here, at the commencement, something curious occurs. The individual objects which surround us are infinite in number. A savage, wherever he looked, beheld forests and trees. To give separate names to every one of those trees, would have been an endless and impracticable undertaking. His first object was to give a name to that particular tree, whose fruit relieved his hunger, or whose shade protected him from the sun. But observing, that though other trees were distinguished from this by peculiar qualities of size or appearance, yet that they also resembled one another in certain common qualities, such as springing from a root, and bearing branches and leaves, he formed in his mind some general idea of their common qualities, and ranging all that possessed them under one class of objects, he called that whole class *a tree*. Longer experience taught him to subdivide this genus into the several species of oak, pine, ash, &c. according as his observation extended to the several qualities in which these trees agreed or differed.

Still, however, only general terms of speech were adopted. For the oak, the pine, and the ash, were names of whole classes of objects; each of which comprehended an immense number of undistinguished individuals. Thus, when the terms man, lion, or tree, were employed in conversation, it could not be known which man, lion, or tree, was meant.

Why, then, will it be better to use these terms than any others? What are the foundation of all grammar, and why may they be considered the most ancient part of speech? Hence, at the commencement, what occurs; and how is this fully illustrated? What did longer experience teach him? Still, however, what only were adopted; why, and what illustration follows?

among the multitude comprehended under one name. Hence, arose a very useful and curious contrivance, for determining the individual object intended, by means of that part of speech called the article. The force of the article consists in pointing or singling out from the common mass, the individual of which we mean to speak. In English, we have two articles, *a* and *the*; *a* is more general; *the*, more definite. *A* is much the same with *one*, and marks only any one individual of a species; as, a lion, a king. *The*, which possesses more properly the force of the article, ascertains some known or determined individual of the species; as, the lion, the king. The Greeks have but one article, which answers to our definite article *the*. They supply the place of our article *a* by the absence of their article. The Latins have no article, but supply its place with the pronouns, *hic*, *ille*, *iste*. This, however, seems to be a defect in their language, since articles, certainly, contribute much to accuracy and precision.

To illustrate this remark, we may observe the different imports of the following expressions, depending wholly on the different employment of the articles: "The son of a king—the son of the king—a son of the king's." Each of these three phrases has an entirely different meaning, which is too obvious to be misunderstood. But in Latin, "*filius regis*," is wholly undetermined; and to explain in which of these three senses it is to be understood, for it may bear any of them, a circumlocution of several words must be used. In the same manner, "are you *a* king?" "are you *the* king?" are questions of quite separate import. "Thou art *a* man," is a very general and harmless position; but "thou art *the* man," is an assertion, capable of striking terror and remorse into the heart.

Besides this quality of being distinguished by the article,

Hence, arose what contrivance, and in what does its force consist? In English, what articles have we; and what is observed of them? *A* is much the same with what; what does it mark; and what examples are given? What does *the* ascertain; and what are the examples? Of the Greeks and the Latins with respect to the article, what is remarked; and why does this, in the Latin, seem a defect? To illustrate this remark, what example is given; and of each of these three phrases, what is observed? Of the phrase '*filius regis*,' what is remarked; and, in order to understand in what sense it is to be taken, what is necessary? What farther illustrations follow? Besides being distinguished by the article, what affections belong to nouns?

three affections belong to substantive nouns ; number, gender, and case, which require our consideration.

Number distinguishes them as one, or many of the same kind, called the singular and plural ; a distinction found in all languages, and which must, indeed, have been coeval with the very infancy of language ; as there were few things which men had more frequent occasion to express, than the difference between one and many. In the Hebrew, Greek, and some other ancient languages, we find not only a plural, but a dual number ; the origin of which may very naturally be accounted for, from separate terms of numbering not being yet invented, and one, two, and many, being all, or at least, the chief numerical distinctions which men, at first, had any occasion to use.

Gender will lead us into a more extensive discussion than number. It being founded on the distinction of the two sexes, can, with propriety, be applied to the names of living creatures only. All other substantive nouns, ought to belong to what grammarians call the neuter gender, which is meant to imply the negation of either sex. Yet, in most languages, a great number of inanimate objects, have been ranked under the like distinctions of masculine and feminine. Thus, in Latin, *gladius*, a sword, for instance, is masculine ; *sagitta*, an arrow, is feminine ; and this assignation of sex to inanimate objects, appears, often, to be entirely capricious ; derived from no other principle than the casual structure of the language, which refers to a certain gender, words of a certain termination. In the Greek and Latin, however, all inanimate objects are not distributed into masculine and feminine ; but, many of them are also classed, where all of them ought to have been, under the neuter gender ; as *templum*, a church ; *sedile*, a seat.

In the French and Italian tongues, the neuter gender is entirely unknown, and all their names of inanimate objects are put upon the same footing with living creatures ; and

Number distinguishes them in what manner ; and why must this distinction have been coeval with the infancy of language ? In what languages do we find a dual number ; and how may its origin be accounted for ? On what distinction is gender founded ; and to what only can it be applied ? To what should all other nouns belong ; and what is it meant to imply ? Yet, in most languages, what is observed ; what instances are mentioned ; and from what is this assignation of sex derived ? Of inanimate objects in the Greek and Latin, however, what is remarked ; and what follows ? In what languages is the neuter gender unknown ; and what course do they pursue ?

distributed, without exception, into masculine and feminine. But, in the English language, it is remarkable that there obtains a peculiarity quite opposite. In the French and Italian there is no neuter gender. In the English, when we use common discourse, all substantive nouns that are not names of living creatures, are neuter without exception. *He, she, and it*, are the marks of the three genders; and we always use *it*, in speaking of any object where there is no sex, or where the sex is not known. And ours, perhaps, is the only language in the known world, except the Chinese, in which the distinction of gender is properly and philosophically applied.

Hence arises a very great and signal advantage of the English tongue, which it is of importance to remark. Though in common discourse we employ only the proper and literal distinction of sexes, yet the genius of the language permits us, whenever it will add beauty to our discourse, to make the names of inanimate objects, masculine or feminine, in a metaphorical sense; and when we do so, we are understood to quit the literal style, and to use one of the figures of discourse. For instance; in speaking of virtue in the course of an ordinary conversation, we refer the word to no sex or gender: We say, "virtue is its own reward;" or, "it is the law of our nature." But if we choose to rise into a higher tone; if we seek to embellish and animate our discourse, we give a sex to virtue; we say, "she descends from heaven;" "she alone confers true honor upon man;" "her gifts are the only durable rewards." By this means we have it in our power to vary our style at pleasure; and this is an advantage which, not only every poet, but every good writer and speaker in prose, is, on many occasions, glad to seize and improve; and it is an advantage peculiar to our own tongue. For, in other languages, every word has one fixed gender; masculine, feminine, or neuter, which can, upon no occasion, be changed. It deserves, however, to be farther remarked, that, when we employ the liberty

In the English language, however, what peculiarity obtains; and how is this fully illustrated? Of our language, what is farther remarked? Hence arises, what great and signal advantage of the English tongue? How is this remark illustrated from the sentence, 'virtue is its own reward;' or, 'it is the law of our nature?' By this means what have we it in our power to do; and of this advantage what is remarked; and why? On this subject, however, what deserves to be farther remarked?

which our language allows, of ascribing sex to any inanimate object, we have not the liberty of making it of what gender we please; but are, in general, subject to some rule of gender, which the currency of language has fixed to that object. The foundation of this rule is supposed to be laid in a certain resemblance, or analogy, to the natural distinction of the two sexes. Thus, we commonly give the masculine gender to those nouns used figuratively, which are conspicuous for the attributes of imparting or communicating; which are by nature strong and efficacious, either to good or evil; or which have a claim to some eminence, whether laudable or not. On the other hand, those are generally made feminine, which are conspicuous for the attributes of containing, and of bringing forth; which have more of the passive in their nature, than of the active; which are peculiarly beautiful, or amiable; or which have respect to such excesses as are rather feminine than masculine.

Having discussed gender, we proceed next to another peculiarity of substantive nouns, which is their cases. Cases, in declension, express the state, or relation, which one object bears to another, denoted by some variation made upon the name of that object; generally, in the final letters, and by some languages, in the initials. All languages, however, do not agree in this mode of expression. The Greek and Latin use declension; but in the English, French, and Italian, it is not found, or, at most, it exists in a very imperfect state. These languages express the relations of objects, by means of the words called prepositions, which are the names of those relations, prefixed to the name of the object. English nouns have no case whatever, except a sort of genitive, usually formed by the addition of the letter *s* to the noun; as when we say "Pope's Dunciad," meaning the Dunciad of Pope. Our personal pronouns have likewise a case, which corresponds with the accusative of the Latin; *I, me; he, him; who, whom*. This, however, is but a slight resemblance of that declension which is used in the ancient languages.

Where is the foundation of this rule supposed to be laid; and what illustration follows? Having discussed gender, to what do we next proceed? What do cases express; and how are they denoted? How does it appear that all languages do not agree in this mode of expression; and how do the latter languages express the relation of objects? What case, only, have English nouns; and what illustration is given? Of our personal pronouns, likewise, what is remarked; but of this, however, what is observed?

Whether the moderns have given beauty or utility to language, by the abolition of cases, may, perhaps, be doubted. They have, however, certainly rendered it more simple, by removing that intricacy which arose from the different forms of declension, of which the Romans had no less than five; and from all the irregularities of these several declensions. By obtaining this simplicity, it must be confessed, we have filled language with a multitude of those little words called prepositions, which are perpetually recurring in every sentence, and seem to have encumbered speech by an addition of terms; and by rendering it more prolix, to have enervated its force. The sound of modern languages has also become less agreeable to the ear, by being deprived of that variety and sweetness, which arose from the length of words and the change of terminations, occasioned by the cases in Greek and Latin. But, perhaps the greatest disadvantage we suffer by the abolition of cases, is the loss of that liberty of transposition in the arrangement of words, which the ancient languages enjoyed.

Pronouns are the class of words most nearly related to substantive nouns; being, as the name imports, the representatives of them. *I, thou, he, she, and it*, are only an abridged way of naming the persons, or objects, with which we have immediate intercourse, or to which we are obliged, frequently, to refer in discourse: accordingly they are subject to the same modifications with nouns, of number, gender, and case. We may observe, however, that the pronouns of the first and second person, *I* and *thou*, have had no distinction of gender in any language; for, since they always refer to persons who are present to each other when they speak, their sex must be evident, and therefore needs not to be distinguished by a masculine or feminine pronoun. But, as the third person may be absent, or unknown, the distinction of gender there becomes requisite; and, consequently, in English, it has all the three genders belonging to it; *he, she,*

What may, perhaps, be doubted; and how have they rendered it more simple? By obtaining this simplicity, however, what have we done; and of them, what is remarked? How has the sound of modern languages, also, become less agreeable to the ear? But what, perhaps, is the greatest disadvantage we suffer by the abolition of cases? Of pronouns what is remarked; and how is this illustrated? To what are they, consequently, subject; but of the first and second person, what may we, at the same time, observe; and why? But why does the distinction of gender, in the third person, become requisite; and what, consequently follows?

it. As to cases, even those languages that do not admit them in substantive nouns, sometimes retain more of them in pronouns, for the sake of the greater readiness in expressing relations; as pronouns occur so frequently in discourse. The personal pronouns, in English, are allowed, by grammarians, to possess two cases besides the nominative; a genitive, and an accusative: *I, mine, me; thou, thine, thee; he, his, him; who, whose, whom.*

Adjectives, or terms of quality, such as, *great, little, black, white*, are the plainest and simplest of all that class of words which are termed attributive. They are common to all languages, and must have been very early invented; since objects could neither be distinguished, nor treated of in discourse, till names were given to their different qualities. There is nothing, however, to be observed in relation to them, except that singularity which attends them in the Greek and Latin, of having the same form given them with substantive nouns; being declined, like them, by cases, and subjected to the same distinctions of number and gender. Hence, grammarians have made them belong to the same part of speech, and divided the noun into substantive and adjective; an arrangement, founded more in attention to the external form of words, than to their nature and force. For adjectives have not, by their nature, the least resemblance to substantive nouns, as they never express any thing which can possibly subsist by itself; which is the very essence of the substantive noun. They are, indeed, more nearly allied to verbs, which, like them, express the attribute of some substance.

As to cases, what is remarked? What cases are the personal pronouns in English allowed to possess; and what illustrations are given? Of adjectives, what is observed; and from what does it appear that they must have been very early invented? What, only, however, is to be observed in relation to them? Hence, how have grammarians treated them; and of this arrangement what is observed? How does it appear that adjectives have no relation to nouns; to what are they more nearly allied; and why?

ANALYSIS.

The parts of speech.

1. Nouns.

A. Distinguished by articles.

a. Indefinite and definite.

b. Their importance illustrated.

B. Number.

C. Gender.

a. Its philosophical application.

b. The advantages of the English language.

D. Case.

a. Its signification.

b. Its variations.

2. Pronouns.

A. Their origin.

3. Adjectives.

LECTURE IX.

STRUCTURE OF LANGUAGE.—ENGLISH TONGUE.

OF all the parts of speech, verbs are, by far, the most complex. It is chiefly in them that the subtle and profound metaphysic of language appears; and from their importance and necessity in speech, we may justly conclude that they were coeval with the origin of language; though a long time must have been requisite to rear them up to that accuracy in which they are now found. It seems very probable, that the radical verb, or the earliest form of it, in most languages, would be what we now call the impersonal verb; "It rains; it thunders; it is light; it is agreeable;" and the like; as this is the very simplest form of the verb, and merely affirms the existence of an event, or of a state of things. After pronouns were invented, such verbs became gradually personal, and were extended through all the variety of tenses and moods.

The tenses of the verb are contrived to mark the several distinctions of time. We think, commonly, of no more than the three great divisions, of past, present, and future; and we might imagine, that if verbs had been so contrived, as merely to express these, no more would have been necessary. But language proceeds with much greater art and subtlety. It splits time into its several moments: it regards it as never standing still, but always flowing; things past, as more or less perfectly completed; and things future, as more or less remote, by different gradations. Hence, the great variety of tenses, found in almost every language.

The present may, indeed, always be regarded as one

Compared with other parts of speech, what is observed of the verb? In them, chiefly, what appears; why may we conclude that they were coeval with the origin of language; and what follows? What seems probable would be the radical verb in most languages; and why? What followed the invention of pronouns? For what are the tenses of verbs contrived? Of what divisions do we commonly think; and under what circumstances might we imagine that no more were necessary? But how does language proceed; and hence what follows? How may the present be regarded; and what example is given?

indivisible point, susceptible of no variety. I write, or I am writing; *scribo*. But it is very different with the past. Even the poorest language has two or three tenses to express its varieties. Ours has no less than four. 1. A past action may be considered as left unfinished; which forms the imperfect tense, "I was writing," *scribebam*. 2. As just now finished. This forms the proper perfect tense, which, in English, is always expressed by the help of the auxiliary verb, "I have written." 3. It may be considered as finished some time ago; the particular time left undetermined. "I wrote, *scripsi*;" which may either signify, "I wrote yesterday, or, I wrote a year ago." This is what grammarians call an ororist, or indefinite past. 4. It may be considered as finished before something else, which is also past. This is the pluperfect. "I had written; *scripseram*. I had written before I received his letter." Here we must perceive, with some pleasure, an advantage which we have over the Latins, who have only three variations upon the past time. They have no proper perfect tense, or one which distinguishes an action just now finished, from an action that was finished some time ago.

The varieties in the future time are two; a simple or indefinite future; "I shall write, *scribam*;" and a future, relating to something else, which is also future, "I shall have written, *scripsero*." I shall have written before he arrives.

Besides tenses, or the power of expressing the distinctions of time, verbs admit a distinction of voices, into the active and the passive; according as the affirmation respects something that is done, or something that is suffered: "I love, or, I am loved." They admit, also, the distinction of moods, which are intended to express the affirmation, whether active or passive, under different forms. The indicative mood, for instance, simply declares a proposition; "I write, I have written:" The imperative requires, commands, threatens; "write thou, let him write." The subjunctive expresses the proposition under the form of a condition, or in subor-

But, of the past, what is remarked; and how many tenses has even the poorest language? How many has ours; and what are examples of each? Hence what may we, with some pleasure, perceive; and what tense do they not possess? How many varieties are there in the future time; and what are the examples? Besides tenses, what other distinction do verbs admit; and according to what? They admit also of what; and for what are they intended? How is this illustrated?

dination to some other thing, to which a reference is made ; "I might write, I could write, I should write, if the case were so and so." This mode of expressing an affirmation under so many different forms, together, also, with the distinction of the three persons, *I, thou, and he*, constitutes what is called the conjugation of verbs, which makes so great a part of the grammar of all languages.

The form of conjugation, or the manner of expressing the varieties of the verb, differs greatly in different tongues. It is esteemed most perfect in those languages which, by varying either the termination or the initial syllable of the verb, express the greatest number of important circumstances, without the help of auxiliary verbs. In the oriental tongues, the verbs are said to have few tenses ; but their moods are so contrived as to express a great variety of circumstances and relations. In the Hebrew, for instance, they say, in one word, without the help of any auxiliary, not only "I have taught," but, "I have taught exactly, or often ; I have been commanded to teach ; I have taught myself." The Greek, which is the most perfect of all the known tongues, is very regular and complete in all the moods and tenses. The Latin, though formed on the same model, is not so perfect ; particularly in the passive voice, which forms most of the tenses, by the help of the auxiliary "*sum*."

In all the modern European tongues, conjugation is very defective. They admit few variations in the termination of the verb itself ; but have almost constant recourse to their auxiliary verbs, throughout all the moods and tenses, both active and passive. Language has undergone a change in conjugation, perfectly similar to that which it has undergone in declension. As prepositions, prefixed to the noun, superseded the use of cases ; so the two great auxiliary verbs, *to have*, and *to be*, with those other auxiliaries which we use in English, *do, shall, will, may, and can*, prefixed to the principal, supersede, in a great measure, the different ter-

What does this mode of expression constitute ; and what is observed of it ? Of the form of conjugation, what is remarked ; and in what language is it esteemed most perfect ? Of verbs in the oriental tongues, what is observed ; and how is this illustrated from the Hebrew, the Greek, and the Latin ? What is the state of conjugation in modern European tongues ? What do they admit ; but to what have they almost constant recourse ? How does it appear that language has undergone a change in conjugation, similar to that which it has undergone in declension ?

minations of moods and tenses, which formed the ancient conjugations.

The remaining parts of speech, which are indeclinable, or admit of no variations, will not require much discussion.

Adverbs are an abridged mode of speech, expressing, by one word, what might, by a circumlocution, be resolved into two or more words belonging to the other parts of speech. "Exceedingly," for instance, is the same as "in a high degree;" "bravely," the same as, "with bravery or valor;" "here," the same as "in this place." Hence, adverbs may be conceived to be less necessary, and of later introduction into the system of speech, than many other classes of words; and, accordingly, the great body of them are derived from other words formerly established in the language.

Prepositions and conjunctions, are words more essential to discourse, than the greater part of adverbs. They form that class of words, called connectives; and serve to express the relations which things bear to each other, their mutual influence, dependencies, and coherence; and thereby join words together into intelligible and significant propositions. Conjunctions are generally employed for connecting sentences, or members of sentences; as, *and*, *because*, and the like. Prepositions are used for connecting words, by showing the relation which one substantive noun bears to another; as *of*, *from*, *to*, &c. The beauty and strength of every language depends, in a great measure, on the proper use of conjunctions, prepositions, and also those relative pronouns, which serve the same purpose of connecting the different parts of discourse. It is the right or wrong management of these, which chiefly makes discourse appear firm and compacted, or disjointed and loose; which carries it on its progress with a smooth and even pace, or renders its march irregular and desultory.

Having thus briefly considered the structure of language

Of the remaining parts of speech, what is remarked? What are adverbs; and what illustrations are given? Hence, what is remarked of them; and, accordingly, what follows? What is remarked of prepositions and conjunctions? What do they form; for what do they serve; and what do they thereby do? What do conjunctions connect; and what are examples? In what manner do prepositions connect words; and what examples are given? On what do the beauty and strength of every language, in a great measure, depend; and what is the effect of the right or wrong management of them? Having thus considered the structure of language in general, into what shall we now enter?

in general, we shall now enter more particularly into an examination of our own.

The language which has been spoken throughout Great Britain, ever since the Norman conquest, is a mixture of the ancient Saxon and Norman French, together with such new and foreign words as commerce and learning have, in a succession of ages, gradually introduced. So formed, the English, like every other compounded language, must needs be somewhat irregular. We cannot expect from it, that correspondence of parts, that complete analogy in structure, which may be found in those simple languages, which have been formed, in a manner, within themselves, and built on one foundation. Hence, our syntax is confined, since there are few remarks in the words themselves, which can show their relation to each other, or point out either their concordance, or their government in the sentence.

But, if these be disadvantages in a compound language, they are balanced by other advantages which attend it; particularly by the number and variety of words with which such a language is commonly enriched. Few languages are, in reality, more copious than the English. In all grave subjects especially, historical, critical, moral, and political, no writer has the least reason to complain of the barrenness of our tongue. The studious reflecting genius of the people, has brought together a great store of expressions, on such subjects, from every quarter. We are rich, too, in the language of poetry. Our poetical style differs widely from prose, not with respect to numbers only, but in the very words themselves; which shows what a variety of words we have it in our power to select and employ, suited to those different occasions. Herein we are infinitely superior to the French, whose poetical language, if it were not distinguished by rhyme, would not be known to differ from their ordinary prose. It is chiefly, indeed, in grave subjects, and with respect to the stronger emotions of the mind, that our language displays its power of expression.

Of what is the language, spoken throughout Great Britain ever since the Norman conquest, a mixture; and what is observed of it? What can we not expect from it; and, hence, of our syntax, what is remarked? Though these be disadvantages, yet, by what are they balanced? In what subjects, particularly, is our language very copious; and what remark follows? Of our poetical style, what is remarked; and what does this show? Herein we are superior to whom; and of their poetical language, what is remarked? Where does our language display its power of expression?

In expressing whatever is delicate, gay, or amusing, however, the French language far surpasses ours. It is, perhaps, the happiest language for conversation, in the known world; but on the higher subjects of composition, the English may be justly esteemed greatly to excel it.

The flexibility of language, or its power of accommodation to different styles and manners, so as to be either grave and strong, or easy and flowing, or tender and gentle, as occasions require, or as an author's genius prompts, is a quality of great importance in speaking and writing. This depends on the copiousness of a language, the different arrangements of which its words are susceptible, and the variety and beauty of the sound of those words, so as to correspond to many different subjects. No language ever possessed these qualities so eminently as the Greek. To the qualities already mentioned, it joined the graceful variety of its different dialects; and thereby readily assumed every sort of character which an author could wish, from the most simple and familiar, to the most majestic. The Latin, though a very beautiful language, is inferior, in this respect, to the Greek. It has more of a fixed character of stateliness and gravity; and is supported by a certain senatorial dignity, of which it is difficult for a writer wholly to divest it, on any occasion. Among the modern tongues, the Italian possesses much more flexibility than the French; and appears to be, on the whole, the most perfect of all the modern dialects; which have arisen on the ruins of the ancient. Our own language, though, perhaps, not equal to the Italian in flexibility, yet possesses a considerable degree of this quality. Whoever considers the diversity of style which appears in some of our best writers, will discover, in our tongue, such a circle of expression, such a power of accommodation to the various tastes of men, as redounds, in the highest degree, to its honor.

In what does the French language far surpass ours; for what is it the happiest language in the world; but where does ours greatly excel it? What quality is of great importance, either in speaking or writing; and on what does this depend? What language possessed these qualities most eminently? To the qualities already mentioned, what did it join; and thereby what did it assume? How does it appear that the Latin, in this respect, is inferior to the Greek? Among modern languages, what is observed of the Italian? Of our language, in this respect, what is remarked; and what will any one discover, who considers the diversity of style which appears in some of our best writers?

The English has been most taxed with its deficiency in harmony of sound. But the melody of its versification, its power of supporting poetical numbers without the assistance of rhyme, is a sufficient proof, that it is far from being unharmonious. Even the hissing sound with which it has been taxed, obtains less frequently than has been suspected : in the first syllables, particularly, where the letter *s* is transformed into *z*, which is one of the sounds on which the ear rests with pleasure ; as in *has, these, loves, hears, &c.*

After all, however, it must be admitted, that smoothness, or beauty of sound, is not one of the distinguishing properties of the English tongue. Though not incapable of being formed into melodious arrangements, yet strength and expressiveness, rather than grace and melody, form its character. It possesses, however, this property—it is the most simple, in its form and construction, of all the European dialects. It is free from all intricacy of cases, declensions, moods, and tenses. Its words are subject to fewer variations from their original form than those of any other language. Its substantives have no distinction of gender, except what nature has made ; and but one variation in case. Its adjectives admit of no change, except what expresses the degree of comparison. Its verbs, instead of running through all the varieties of ancient conjugation, admit only four or five changes in termination. A few prepositions and auxiliary verbs supply all the purposes of significancy in meaning ; while the words, for the most part, preserve their form unchanged. Hence, our language acquires a simplicity and facility, which is the reason why it is so frequently written and spoken with inaccuracy. We imagine that a competent skill in it may be acquired without any study ; and that in a syntax so narrow and confined as ours, there is nothing which demands attention. Hence, arises the habit of writing in a loose and inaccurate manner. But the fundamental rules of syntax are the same in all languages, and attention to them is absolutely necessary for writing or

With what deficiency has the English language been most taxed ; but what is a sufficient proof, that it is far from being unharmonious ? Of the hissing sound with which it has been taxed, what is observed ; and what illustration follows ? After all, however, of it what must be admitted ; and what form its character ? But what property does it possess ; from what is it free ; and of its words what is remarked ? How is this fully illustrated ? Hence, what does it acquire ; and what do we imagine ? Hence, arises what habit ; but what follows ?

speaking with any degree of purity, propriety, or elegance.

Whatever the advantages or defects of the English language may be, as it is our own language, it demands a high degree of our study and attention. It is well known, to what an extent the Greeks and Romans, in their most polished and flourishing times, cultivated their respective tongues. The French and the Italians, also, have bestowed much attention upon theirs. And their example deserves the more to be imitated, as, whatever knowledge may be acquired by the study of other languages, it can never be communicated with advantage, except by those who can write and speak their own language with propriety and skill. Though the matter of an author be ever so good and useful, his compositions will always suffer in the public esteem, if his expression be deficient in purity and elegance. At the same time, the attainment of a correct and elegant style, is an object which demands attention and labor. If any imagine that they can catch it by the ear, or acquire it by a slight perusal of some of our good authors, they will find themselves much disappointed. The numerous grammatical errors, and the frequent offences against purity of language, committed by writers, who, in other respects, are far from being contemptible, demonstrate that a careful study of the language is previously requisite, in all who aim at writing it correctly.*

* On this subject, the reader should study, with the greatest care, "A Philosophical and Practical Grammar of the English Language," by Noah Webster, Esq., and the Institutes of English Grammar, by Gould Brown.

Whatever the advantages or defects of the English language may be, what does it deserve; and why? Of the attention of the Greeks and Romans, and the French and Italians, to their respective languages, what is remarked; and why does their example deserve to be imitated? How is this illustrated? At the same time, what demands attention and labor; and what remark follows? What is the closing remark?

ANALYSIS.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Verbs. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Tenses. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Present, past, and future. B. Voices. C. Moods. D. Conjugation. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Of ancient languages. b. Of modern languages. C. Auxiliaries. 2. Adverbs. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Prepositions. 4. Conjunctions. 5. The sources of the English language. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Its disadvantages. B. Its advantages. 6. The flexibility of language. 7. The character of the English language. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. The necessity of studying it. |
|---|--|

LECTURE X.

STYLE—PERSPICUITY AND PRECISION.

HAVING finished the subject of language, style is the next subject of consideration.

Style is the peculiar manner in which a man expresses his conceptions by means of language. It is different from mere language or words. The words which an author employs, may be proper and faultless; and his style may, nevertheless, have great faults: it may be dry, or stiff, or feeble, or affected. Style has always some reference to an author's manner of thinking. It is a picture of the ideas which arise in his mind, and of the manner in which they originate: hence, when we are examining an author's composition, it is, in many cases, extremely difficult, to separate the style from the sentiment; and that they should be so intimately connected, is not to be wondered at, since style is nothing else than that sort of expression which our thoughts most readily assume.

All the qualities of a good style, may be arranged under two heads; perspicuity and ornament. For all that can possibly be required of language is, to convey our ideas clearly to the minds of others; and, at the same time, in such a dress, as by pleasing and interesting them, shall most effectually strengthen the impression which we seek to make.

Perspicuity, it will be readily admitted, is the fundamental quality of style; and is so essential in every kind of writing, that for the want of it nothing can atone. Without it, the richest ornaments of style only glimmer through the dark; and perplex, instead of pleasing the reader. If we are obliged to follow a writer with much care, to pause, and to

Having finished the subject of language, what is the next subject of consideration? What is style? How is it made to appear, that style is different from mere language or words? To what has style always some reference; of what is it a picture; and hence what follows? Why is not their intimate connection a matter of wonder? Under what two heads may all the qualities of a good style be ranged; and why? What is the fundamental quality of style; and what is observed of it? Without it, what would be the effect of the richest ornaments? Under what circumstances will a writer fail to please us; and what remarks follow?

read over his sentences a second time, in order to comprehend them fully, he will never please us long. Mankind are too indolent to relish so much labor. Though they may pretend to admire the author's depth, after they have discovered his meaning, yet they will seldom be inclined to take up his work a second time.

Perspicuity in writing, is not to be considered as merely a sort of negative virtue, or freedom from defect. It has higher merit; it is a degree of positive beauty. We are pleased with an author, and consider him as deserving praise, who frees us from all fatigue of searching for his meaning; who carries us through his subject without any embarrassment or confusion; whose style flows always like a limpid stream, where we see to the very bottom.

The study of perspicuity requires attention, first, to single words and phrases, and then to the construction of sentences. When considered with respect to words and phrases, it requires these three requisites; *purity*, *propriety*, and *precision*.

Purity and propriety of language, are often used indiscriminately for each other; and, indeed, they are very nearly allied. A distinction, however, obtains between them. Purity consists in the use of such words, and such constructions, as belong to the idiom of the language which we speak; in opposition to words and phrases that are imported from other languages, or that are obsolete, or new coined, or used without proper authority. Propriety is the selection of such words, as the best and most established usage has appropriated to those ideas which we intend to express by them. It implies the correct and happy application of them, according to that usage, in opposition to vulgar or low expressions; and to words and phrases, which would be less significant of the ideas that we mean to convey. Style may be pure, that is, it may all be strictly English, without Scotisms or Gallicisms, or ungrammatical expressions of any kind, and may, nevertheless, be deficient in propriety. The words may be ill chosen; not adapted to

Merely as what, is perspicuity not to be considered; and what higher merit has it? With an author of what description are we pleased? In what order does perspicuity require attention; and when considered with respect to words and phrases, what are its three requisites? Of purity and propriety of language, what is remarked; and how are they distinguished? How may style be pure, and at the same time be deficient in propriety; but, at the same time, where they both meet, what is their effect?

the subject, nor fully expressive of the author's meaning. He has taken them, indeed, from the general mass of English language; but his choice has been made without happiness or skill. Style, however, cannot be proper without being also pure; and where both purity and propriety meet, besides making style perspicuous, they also render it graceful.

When obsolete, or new coined words, are mentioned, as being incongruous with purity of style, it will be understood, of course, that some exceptions are to be made. On certain occasions, they may have grace. Poetry admits of greater latitude than prose, with respect to coining, or, at least, new compounding words; yet, even here, this liberty should be used with a sparing hand. In prose, such innovations are more hazardous, and have a worse effect. They are apt to give style an affected and conceited air; and should never be used, except by those whose established reputation gives them some degree of dictatorial power over language.

We shall now consider the import of precision in language, which, as it is the highest part of the quality denoted by perspicuity, and, at the same time, the least understood, merits a full discussion.

The exact import of precision, may be drawn from the etymology of the word. It is derived from '*præcidere*,' to cut off: it signifies retrenching all superfluities, and pruning the expression, so as to exhibit neither more nor less than an exact copy of his idea who uses it. It was observed before, that it is often difficult to separate the qualities of style from the qualities of thought; and it is found so in this instance. For, in order to write with precision, though this be properly a quality of style, one must possess a very considerable degree of distinctness and accuracy in his manner of thinking.

The words which a man uses to express his ideas, may be faulty in three respects; they may either not express that idea which the author intends, but some other which only resembles, or is akin to it; or, they may express that idea,

Of the use of obsolete, or new coined words, in poetry, what is observed; yet, even here, how should this liberty be used? In prose, why are such innovations more hazardous; and by whom only should they be used? The import of what shall we now consider; and why does it merit a full discussion? Whence may the exact import of precision be drawn; and what is it? What was before observed; and why is it found to be so in this instance? In what three respects may the words that a man uses to express his ideas, be faulty?

but not quite fully and completely ; or, they may express it, together with something more than he intends. Precision stands opposed to all these three faults ; but chiefly to the last. In an author's writing with propriety, his being free from the two former faults seems implied. The words which he uses are proper ; that is, they express that idea which he intends, and they express it fully ; but to be precise signifies that they express that idea, and no more. This requires a writer to have, himself, a very clear apprehension of the object he means to present to us ; to have laid fast hold of it in his mind, and never to waver in any one view he takes of it—a perfection to which, indeed, few writers attain.

The use of a superfluity of words, forms what is generally called a loose style ; and is the proper opposite to precision. Feeble writers employ a multitude of words to make themselves understood, as they think, more distinctly ; and they only confound the reader. They are sensible of not having caught the precise expression, to convey what they would signify ; they do not, indeed, conceive their own meaning very precisely themselves ; and, therefore, help it out, as they can, by this and the other word, which may, as they suppose, supply the defect, and bring you somewhat nearer to their idea : they are always going about it, and about it, but never just hit the thing. The image, as they set it before you, is always seen double ; and no double image is distinct. When an author tells us of his hero's *courage* in the day of battle, the expression is precise, and we understand it fully. But if, from a desire of multiplying words, he will praise his *courage* and *fortitude* ; at the moment he joins these two words together, our idea begins to waver. He intends to express one quality more strongly ; but he is, in fact, expressing two. *Courage* resists danger ; *fortitude* supports pain. The occasion of exerting each of these qualities is different ; and being led to think of both of them

To which of these three faults, particularly, does precision stand opposed ; and why ? How is this illustrated ? What does this require ; and of it what is observed ? What forms what is generally called a loose style ; and of what is it the proper opposite ? Why do feeble writers employ a multitude of words ; and what is their effect ? Of what are they sensible ; and as they do not conceive their own meaning clearly, what consequence follows ? Of the image, as they set it before us, what is remarked ? How is this illustrated from the words *courage* and *fortitude* ? What is their respective signification ; and what remarks follow ?

together, when only one of them should engage our attention, our view is rendered unsteady, and our conception of the object indistinct.

The great source of a loose style, in opposition to precision, is the injudicious use of those words termed synonymous. They are called synonymous, because they agree in expressing one principal idea; but, for the most part, if not always, they express it with some diversity in the circumstances. They are varied by some accessory idea which every word introduces, and which forms the distinction between them. Scarcely in any language, are there two words that convey precisely the same idea; a person thoroughly conversant in the propriety of language, will always be able to observe something that distinguishes them. As they are like different shades of the same color, an accurate writer can employ them to great advantage, by using them so as to heighten and to finish the picture which he gives us. He supplies by one, what was wanting in the other to the force, or to the lustre of the image which he means to exhibit.

In the English language, very many instances might be given of a difference in meaning among words reputed synonymous; and as the subject is of importance, we shall now point out some of these. The instances given, may, themselves, be of use; and they will serve to show the necessity of attending, with care and strictness, to the exact import of words, if we would ever write with accuracy and precision.

Austerity, severity, rigor. Austerity relates to the manner of living; severity, of thinking; rigor, of punishment. To austerity, is opposed effeminacy; to severity, relaxation; to rigor, clemency. A hermit, is austere in his life; a casuist, severe in his application of religion or law; a judge, rigorous in his sentences.

Custom, habit. Custom respects the action; habit, the

What is the great source of a loose style; and why are they called synonymous? But, for the most part, how do they express it; and how are they varied? What illustration follows? As they are like different shades of the same color, how can an accurate writer employ them to great advantage; and in what manner? In the English language of what might many instances be given; and why are some of these pointed out? Of the instances themselves, what is remarked; and to show what will they serve? What is the difference between *austerity*, *severity*, and *rigor*; and what illustration is given? How are *custom* and *habit* distinguished; and, by them, what do we respectively mean? What illustration follows?

actor. By custom, we mean the frequent repetition of the same act; by habit, the effect which that repetition produces on the mind or body. By the custom of walking often in the streets, one acquires the habit of idleness.

Surprised, astonished, amazed, confounded. We are surprised with what is new or unexpected; we are astonished at what is vast or great; we are amazed at what is incomprehensible; we are confounded by what is shocking or terrible.

Pride, vanity. Pride makes us esteem ourselves; vanity, makes us desire the esteem of others. It is just, therefore, to say, that a man may be too proud to be vain.

Haughtiness, disdain. Haughtiness is founded on the high opinion we entertain of ourselves; disdain, on the low opinion we have of others.

To weary, to fatigue. The continuance of the same thing wearies us; labor fatigues us. We become weary from standing; fatigued, from walking. A suiter wearies us by his perseverance; fatigues us by his importunity.

To abhor, to detest. To abhor, imports, simply, strong dislike; to detest, imports, also, strong disapprobation. One abhors being in debt; he detests treachery.

To invent, to discover. We invent things that are new; we discover what was before hidden. Galileo invented the telescope; Harvey discovered the circulation of the blood.

Only, alone. Only, imports that there is no other of the same kind; alone, imports being accompanied by no other. An only child is one that has neither brother nor sister; a child alone, is one that is left by itself.

Entire, complete. A thing is entire, that wants none of its parts; complete, that wants none of the appendages that belong to it. A man may have an entire house to himself; and yet not have one complete apartment.

Tranquillity, peace, calm. Tranquillity respects a situation free from trouble, considered in itself; peace, the

What is the difference between *surprised, astonished, amazed, and confounded*? What is the relative effects of *pride and vanity*; and what remark is, therefore, just? On what are *haughtiness and disdain*, respectively founded? How is the difference between *to weary and to fatigue*, illustrated? What do *to abhor and to detest*, respectively denote; and what illustration follows? How is the distinction between *to invent and to discover*, illustrated? What is the difference between *only and alone*; and what instance of illustration is given? How are *entire and complete*, distinguished; and what example is given? Illustrate the difference between *tranquillity, peace, and calm*.

same situation, with respect to any causes that might interrupt it; calm, with regard to a disturbed situation going before, or following it. A good man enjoys tranquillity in himself; peace with others; and calm, after the storm.

Wisdom, prudence. Wisdom, leads us to speak and act as is most proper; prudence, prevents our speaking and acting improperly. A wise man employs the most proper means for success; a prudent man, the safest means for not being brought into danger.

Enough, sufficient. Enough relates to the quantity which we wish to have of a thing; sufficient, relates to the use that is to be made of it. Hence, enough, generally imports a greater quantity than sufficient does. The covetous man never has enough: although he has what is sufficient for nature.

With, by. Both these particles express the connection between some instrument or means of effecting an end, and the agent who employs it; but *with*, expresses a more close and immediate connection; *by*, a more remote one. A man killed *with* a sword, dies *by* violence. The criminal is bound *with* ropes *by* the executioner.*

These are a few, among many instances of words, in our language, which, by careless writers, are apt to be considered as synonymous. Their significations approach, but are not precisely the same. The more the distinction in the meaning of such words is weighed, and attended to, the more accurately and forcibly shall we speak and write.

It was observed before, that though all subjects of writing or discourse demand perspicuity, yet all do not require it to an equal degree. It is, indeed, in every sort of writing, a great beauty to have, at least, some measure of precision, in distinction from that loose profusion of words which imprints

* The author had it in contemplation, when he commenced this abridgment, to extend these discriminations through the space of another lecture; but having concluded, soon to offer to the public a work on this subject, he has abandoned his original design.

Of *wisdom* and *prudence*, what is remarked; and how is this illustrated? What is the difference between *enough* and *sufficient*; hence, what follows; and what illustration is given? *With* and *by*, both express the connection between what; but with what difference, and what illustrations follow? On the instances of synonymous words, here given, what is remarked; and what will be the effect of weighing such distinctions? What was before observed; and what is, in every sort of writing, a great beauty?

no clear idea on the reader's mind. But we must, at the same time, be on our guard, lest too great a study of precision, especially in subjects where it is not strictly requisite, betray us into a dry and barren style; lest, from a desire of pruning too closely, we retrench all copiousness and ornament. To write with copiousness and precision, to be flowing and graceful, and, at the same time, correct and exact in the choice of every word, is, doubtless, one of the highest and most difficult attainments in writing. But we must study never to sacrifice, totally, any one of these qualities to the other; and, by a proper management, both of them may be made fully consistent, if our ideas be precise, and our knowledge and stock of words be, at the same time, extensive.

But, about what must we, at the same time, be on our guard; and why? What is, doubtless, one of the highest and most difficult attainments in writing; and what follows?

ANALYSIS.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. The definition of style. | B. A loose style. |
| 2. The qualities of a good style. | C. Synonymous words. |
| A. Perspicuity. | a. Examples of discrimina- |
| a. Purity. | tions. |
| b. Propriety. | D. Concluding remarks. |
| c. Precision. | |

LECTURE XI.

STRUCTURE OF SENTENCES.

A SENTENCE always implies some one complete proposition or enunciation of thought. Aristotle defines it to be "a form of speech which hath a beginning and an end within itself, and is of such a length as to be easily comprehended at once." This, however, admits of considerable latitude. For a sentence, or period, consists, always, of component parts, which are called its members; and as these members may be either few or many, and may be connected in several different ways, the same thought, or mental proposition, may often be either brought into one sentence, or split into two or three, without the material breach of any rule.

The first variety that occurs in the consideration of sentences, is, the distinction of long and short ones. Sentences immoderately long, and consisting of too many members, always transgress some one or other of the rules which shall be soon mentioned as necessary to be observed in every good sentence. In discourses that are to be spoken, regard must be had to the easiness of pronunciation, which is not consistent with too long periods. In compositions where pronunciation has no place, still, however, by using long periods too frequently, an author overloads the reader's ear, and fatigues his attention. At the same time, there may be an excess in too many short sentences also; by which the sense is split and broken, the connection of thought weakened, and the memory burdened by presenting to it a long succession of minute objects.

With regard to the length and construction of sentences, the French critics very justly divide style into *style periodique*, and *style coupé*. The *style periodique* is where the

What does a sentence always imply? How does Aristotle define it? Of this definition what is remarked; and why? What is the first variety that occurs in the consideration of sentences? Of sentences immoderately long what is observed? In discourses that are to be spoken, to what must regard be had; and of compositions where pronunciation has no place, what is remarked? At the same time, in what may there be excess; and what is its effect? With regard to the length and construction of sentences, how do the French critics divide style? What is the *style periodique*; what is observed of it; and where does it abound?

sentences are composed of several members linked together, and hanging upon one another; so that the sense of the whole is not brought out till the close. This is the most pompous, musical, and oratorical manner of composing; and abounds in the writings of Cicero, and Sir William Temple. The *style coupé* is, where the sense is formed into short independent propositions, each complete within itself; as in the following of Mr. Pope: "I confess it was want of consideration that made me an author. I writ, because it amused me. I corrected, because it was as pleasant to me to correct as to write. I published, because I was told, I might please such as it was a credit to please." This is very much the French manner of writing; and always suits gay and easy subjects. The *style periodique*, gives an air of gravity and dignity to composition: the *style coupé* is more lively and striking. According to the nature of the composition, therefore, and the general character it ought to bear, the one or the other may predominate. But in almost every kind of composition, the great rule is to intermix them. For the ear tires of either of them when too long continued: whereas, by a proper mixture of long and short periods, the ear is gratified, and a certain sprightliness is joined with majesty in our style.

So much depends upon the proper construction of sentences, that in every kind of composition, we cannot be too strict in our attention to it. For, whatever the subject may be, if the sentences are constructed in a clumsy, perplexed, or feeble manner, it is impossible that a work, thus composed, should be read with pleasure, or even with profit. But, by giving attention to the rules which relate to this part of style, we acquire the habit of expressing ourselves with perspicuity and elegance; and if a disorder chance to arise in any of our sentences, we immediately see where it lies, and are able to rectify it.

The properties most essential to a perfect sentence, seem to be the four following: 1. Clearness and precision. 2. Unity. 3. Strength. 4. Harmony.

What is the *style coupé*; and what example is given of it? Whose manner of writing is this; and what does it suit? What is farther observed of these different styles; and why should they, in most compositions, be intermixed? As much depends upon the proper construction of sentences, what follows; and why? But, from attention to the rules which relate to this part of style, what will result? What are the properties most essential to a perfect sentence?

The least failure in clearness and precision, the least degree of ambiguity, which leaves the mind in any sort of suspense as to the meaning, ought to be avoided with the greatest care; nor is it so easy a matter to keep clear of all this as one might, at first, imagine. Ambiguity arises from two causes: either from a wrong choice of words, or a wrong collocation of them. Of the choice of words, as far as regards perspicuity, we have already spoken. Of the collocation of them we are now to treat. From the nature of our language, a leading rule in the arrangement of our sentences is, to place the words or members most nearly related, as near to each other in the sentence as possible; so as to make their mutual relation evident. This rule is too often neglected, even by good writers. A few instances will show, both its importance and its application.

First, in the position of adverbs, which are used to qualify the signification of something which either precedes or follows them, a good deal of nicety is to be observed. 'By greatness,' says Mr. Addison, 'I do not only mean the bulk of any single object, but the largeness of a whole view.*' Here the place of the adverb *only*, renders it a limitation of the following word, mean. 'I do not only mean.' The question may then be asked, What does he more than mean? Had he placed it after *bulk*, still it would have been wrong. 'I do not mean the *bulk only* of any single object.' For he might then ask, What does he mean more than the bulk? Is it the color? Or any other property? Its proper place, undoubtedly, is, after the word *object*. 'By greatness, I do not mean the bulk of any single object only;' for then, when we put the question, What more does he mean than the bulk of a single object? The answer comes out exactly as the author intends, and gives it; 'The largeness of a whole view.' 'Theism,' says Lord Shaftesbury, 'can only be opposed to polytheism, or atheism.' It

* Spectator, No. 412.

What should be avoided with the greatest care; and why? From what two causes does ambiguity arise? Of which have we already spoken; and of which are we now to treat? From the nature of our language, what is a leading rule in the arrangement of our sentences; and of this rule what is remarked? In the first place, in the position of what adverbs, is a good deal of nicety to be observed? What example is given to illustrate this remark; and what is observed of it? Where is its proper place; and why? What instance is given from Lord Shaftesbury; and what is remarked of it?

may be asked, then, is theism capable of nothing else, but being opposed to polytheism, or atheism? This is what the words literally import, through the wrong collocation of *only*. He should have said, 'Theism can be opposed only to polytheism or atheism.' In conversation, such inaccuracies may have no material inconvenience, because the tone and emphasis used in pronouncing them, generally serve to show their reference, and to make the meaning clear. But, in writing, where a person speaks to the eye, and not to the ear, he ought to be more accurate; and so to connect those adverbs with the words which they qualify, as to put his meaning out of doubt, upon the first inspection.

Secondly, when a circumstance is interposed in the middle of a sentence, it sometimes requires attention, to place it, so as to divest it of all ambiguity. For instance, 'Are these designs,' says Lord Bolingbroke, 'which any man, who is born a Briton, in any circumstances, in any situation, ought to be ashamed or afraid to avow?*' Here we are left at a loss, whether these words, '*in any circumstances, in any situation,*' are connected with 'a man born a Briton, in any circumstances, or situation,' or with that man's 'avowing his designs, in any circumstances, or situation, into which he may be brought?' If the latter, as seems most probable, was intended to be the meaning, the arrangement should have been thus: 'Are these designs, which any man who is born a Briton, ought to be ashamed or afraid, in any circumstances, in any situation, to avow?'

Thirdly, still more attention is required to the proper disposition of the relative pronouns, *who, which, what, whose*; and of all those particles which express the connection of the parts of speech with one another. As all reasoning depends upon this connection, we cannot be too accurate with regard to it. A small error may obscure the meaning of the whole sentence; and even where the meaning is apparent, yet

* *Dissect. on Parties, Dedicat.*

Why may such inaccuracies have no material inconvenience in conversation; but of them in writing what is remarked? In the second place, what sometimes requires attention; and to illustrate this remark, what example is given from Lord Bolingbroke? Here, about what are we left at a loss; and if the latter was intended to be the meaning, how should it have been arranged? In the third place, to what is still more attention required? As all reasoning depends upon this connection, what follows; and why?

where these relative particles are misplaced, we always find something awkward and disjointed in the structure of the sentence. The following passage in one of Bishop Sherlock's sermons,* will serve to exemplify these observations: 'It is folly to pretend to arm ourselves against the accidents of life, by heaping up treasures, which nothing can protect us against, but the good providence of our Heavenly Father.' Which always refers grammatically to the immediately preceding substantive, which is here 'treasure;' and this would make nonsense of the whole period. The sentence should have been constructed thus: 'It is folly to pretend, by heaping up treasures, to arm ourselves against the accidents of life, against which nothing can protect us, but the good providence of our Heavenly Father.' Of the same nature is the following inaccuracy in the writings of Dean Swift. He is recommending to young clergymen, to write their sermons fully and distinctly. 'Many,' says he, 'act so directly contrary to this method, that, from a habit of saving time and paper, which they acquired at the university, they write in so diminutive a manner, that they can hardly read what they have written.' He certainly does not mean that they had acquired time and paper at the university, but that they had acquired this habit there; and, therefore, his words ought to have run thus; 'From a habit, which they have acquired at the university, of saving time and paper, they write in so diminutive a manner, that they can hardly read what they have written.'

With regard to relatives, I must farther observe, that obscurity often arises from the too frequent repetition of them, particularly of the pronouns *who*, and *they*, and *theirs*, and *them*, when we have occasion to refer to different persons; as in the following sentence of Archbishop Tillotson: 'Men look with an evil eye upon the good that is in others; and think that their reputation obscures them, and their commendable qualities stand in their light; and therefore they do what they can to cast a cloud over them, that the bright shining of their virtues may not obscure them.'†

* Vol. II. Sermon. 15.

† Vol. I. Sermon. 42.

What passage will serve to exemplify this observation? On this sentence what is remarked; and how should it have been constructed? Of the same nature is what inaccuracy from Dean Swift? In this passage what does he not mean; and, therefore, how should his words have been arranged? With regard to relatives, what must be farther observed; and as an illustration of this remark, what sentence is given from Tillotson?

This is altogether careless writing. It renders style often obscure, always embarrassed and inelegant ; and to avoid it, the sentence should be thrown into some other form.

We now proceed to the second quality of a well arranged sentence, which we termed its unity. This is a capital property. The very nature of a sentence implies one proposition to be expressed. It may, indeed, consist of parts ; but these parts must be so closely bound together, as to make the impression upon the mind, of one object, not of many.

To preserve this unity, we must first observe, that during the course of the sentence, the scene should be changed as little as possible. There is, commonly, in every sentence, some person or thing, which is the governing word. This should be continued so, if possible, from the beginning to the end of it. Should one express himself in this manner : ‘ After we came to anchor, they put me on shore, where I was welcomed by all my friends, who received me with the greatest kindness.’ Here, though the objects are sufficiently connected, yet by this manner of representing them, by shifting them so often, both the place and the person, *we*, and *they*, and *I*, and *who*, they appear in such a disunited view, that the sense of connection is nearly lost. The sentence may be restored to its proper unity, by turning it after the following manner : ‘ Having come to an anchor, I was put on shore, where I was welcomed by all my friends, and received with the greatest kindness.’

Another rule is, never to crowd into one sentence, things which have so little connection, that they could bear to be divided into two or three sentences. The violation of this rule never fails to hurt and displease the reader. Its effect, indeed, is so bad, that of the two, it is the safer extreme, to err rather by too many short sentences, than by one that is overloaded and embarrassed. Examples of the transgression of this rule are exceedingly numerous. ‘ Arch-

Of this what is remarked ; and to avoid it what must be done ? What is the second quality of a well arranged sentence ; and of this, what is remarked ? What does the very nature of a sentence imply ; of what may it consist ; but of these what is observed ? To preserve this unity, what is first to be observed ? What does every sentence, commonly, contain ; and of this what is remarked ? By what example is this remark illustrated ; and what is observed of it ? How may this sentence be restored to its proper unity ? What is another rule for preserving the unity of a sentence ; and what effect does the violation of it produce ? What example of this is given from Tillotson ; and what is observed of it ?

bishop Tillotson,' says an author of the *History of England*, 'died in this year. He was exceedingly beloved both by king William and queen Mary, who nominated Dr. Tennyson, Bishop of Lincoln, to succeed him.' Who would expect the latter part of this sentence to follow, in consequence of the former? 'He was exceedingly beloved by both king and queen,' is the proposition of the sentence; we look for some proof of this, or at least something related to it to follow; when we are on a sudden carried off to a new proposition, 'who nominated Dr. Tennyson to succeed him,' The following sentence, from a translation of Plutarch, is still worse: 'Their march,' says the author, speaking of the Greeks under Alexander, 'was through an uncultivated country, whose savage inhabitants fared hardly, having no other riches than a breed of lean sheep, whose flesh was rank and unsavory, by reason of their continued feeding upon sea fish.' Here the scene is changed again and again. The march of the Greeks, the description of the inhabitants through whose country they passed, the account of their sheep, and the reason that they were ill tasted food, form a jumble of objects, slightly related to each other, which the reader cannot, without much difficulty, comprehend under one view.

A third rule for preserving the unity of sentences, is, to keep clear of all parentheses in the middle of them. These may, on some occasions, have a spirited appearance; as prompted by a certain vivacity of thought, which can glance happily aside, as it is going along. But, for the most part, their effect is extremely bad; being a perplexed method of disposing of some thought, which a writer wants art to introduce into its proper place. Inaccuracies of this kind occur so frequently among incorrect writers, that it is not necessary to introduce any instances.

We shall add only one rule more for the unity of a sentence, which is to bring it always to a full and perfect close. Every thing that is one, should have a beginning, a middle, and an end. It need hardly be observed, that an unfinished

What sentence follows from a translation of Plutarch; and what is remarked of it? What is the third rule for preserving the unity of sentences? Why may these, on some occasions, have a spirited appearance; but why is their effect, for the most part, extremely bad? Of the frequent occurrence of inaccuracies of this kind, what is remarked? What farther rule, only, is added for the unity of a sentence; and why? What need hardly be observed; but what do we very often meet with?

sentence is no sentence at all, according to any grammatical rule. But we very often meet with sentences that are more than finished. When we have arrived at what we expected to be the conclusion, when we have come to the word on which the mind is naturally led, by what went before, to rest; unexpectedly some circumstance pops out, which ought to have been omitted, or to have been disposed of elsewhere. Thus, for instance, in the following sentence, from Sir William Temple, the adjection to the sentence is entirely foreign to it. Speaking of Burnet's Theory of the Earth, and Fontenelle's Plurality of Worlds: 'The first,' says he, 'could not end his learned treatise without a panegyric of modern learning, in comparison of the ancient; and the other, falls so grossly into the censure of the old poetry, and preference of the new, that I could not read either of these strains without some indignation; which no quality among men is so apt to raise in me as self-sufficiency.' The word 'indignation,' should have concluded the sentence; for what follows is altogether new, and is added after the proper close.

How is this remark illustrated? What instance is given from Sir William Temple? What word should have concluded the sentence; and why?

ANALYSIS.

1. The definition of a sentence.
2. Long and short sentences.
 - A. The distinction of French critics.
3. Essential properties of a perfect sentence.
 - A. Clearness and precision.
 - a. In the position of adverbs.
 - b. In the interposition of sentences.
 - c. In the distribution of relatives.

- B. Unity.
 - a. The scene not to be changed.
 - b. Distinct subjects not to be introduced in the same sentence.
 - c. Parentheses in the middle of sentences to be avoided.
 - d. Sentences to be brought to a full and perfect close.

LECTURE XII.

STRUCTURE OF SENTENCES.

HAVING treated of perspicuity and unity, we proceed to the third quality of a correct sentence, which is termed strength. By this, is meant, such a disposition of the several words and members, as shall bring out the sense to the best advantage; as shall render the impression, which the period is designed to make, most full and complete; and give every word, and every member, its due weight and force. To the production of this effect, perspicuity and unity are, no doubt, absolutely necessary; but still more is requisite. For a sentence may be clear enough; it may also be sufficiently compact, or have the requisite unity; and yet, by some unfavorable circumstance in the structure, it may fail in that strength or liveliness of impression, which a more happy arrangement would have produced.

The first rule which we shall give for promoting the strength of a sentence, is, to divest it of all redundant words. These may, sometimes, be consistent with a considerable degree both of clearness and unity; but they are always enfeebling. It is a general maxim, that, whatever can be easily supplied in the mind, is better left out in the expression. Thus: 'Content with deserving a triumph, he refused the honor of it,' is better than to say, 'Being content with deserving a triumph, he refused the honor of it.' It is certainly, therefore, one of the most useful exercises of correction, upon reviewing what we have written or composed, to contract that round-about method of expression, and to lop off those useless excrescences, which are commonly found in a first draught. But we must be careful not to run into the opposite extreme, of pruning so closely, as

What is the third quality of a correct sentence; and by this what is meant? To the production of this effect, why is something more than perspicuity and unity requisite? What is the first rule given for the promotion of the strength of a sentence; and of these what is remarked? What is a general maxim; and of it what illustration is given? What, therefore, is one of the most useful exercises of correction? But about what must we be careful; and why?

to give a hardness and dryness to the style. Some leaves must be left to surround and shelter the fruit.

As sentences should be cleared of redundant words, so also, they should not contain redundant members. As every word ought to present a new idea, so every member ought to contain a new thought. Opposed to this, stands the fault we sometimes meet with, of the last member of a period, being no other than the echo of the former, or the repetition of it in a different form. For example, speaking of beauty, 'The very first discovery of it,' says Mr. Addison, 'strikes the mind with inward joy, and spreads delight through all the faculties.' And elsewhere, 'It is impossible for us to behold the divine works with coldness or indifference, or to survey so many beauties, without a secret satisfaction and complacency.*' In both these instances, little or nothing is added by the second member of the sentence to what was already expressed in the first; and though the free and flowing manner of such an author as Mr. Addison, may palliate such negligences; yet, in general, it holds, that style, freed from this prolixity, appears both stronger and more beautiful.

The second direction for promoting the strength of a sentence, is, to attend particularly to the use of copulatives, relatives, and all the particles employed for transition and connection. These little words, *but*, *and*, *which*, *whose*, *where*, &c. are frequently the most important words of any; they are the joints or hinges upon which all sentences turn, and of course, much, both of their gracefulness and strength, must depend upon such particles. Some observations on this subject, which appear to be worthy of particular remembrance, shall here be noticed.

What is termed the splitting of particles, or separating a preposition from the noun which it governs, is always to be avoided. As if we should say, 'Though virtue borrows no assistance from, yet it may often be accompanied by, the

* Spectator, Nos. 412 and 413.

As sentences should be cleared of redundant words, so, also, what should they not contain; and as every word ought to present a new idea, so, what follows? Opposed to this stands what fault; and as illustratives of this remark, what examples are given? Of both these instances, what is observed; and what remark follows? What is the second direction for promoting the strength of a sentence? Of these little words, *but*, *and*, *which*, &c., what is remarked? Of what is termed the splitting of particles, what is observed; what example is given; and what is its effect?

advantages of fortune.' In such instances, we feel a sort of pain, from the revulsion, or violent separation of two things, which, by their nature, should be closely united.

The simplicity of style is much injured by the unnecessary multiplication of relative and demonstrative particles: thus, if a writer should say, 'There is nothing which disgusts me sooner than the empty pomp of language;' he would express himself less simply than if he had said, 'Nothing disgusts me sooner than the empty pomp of language.' The former mode of expression, in the introduction of a subject, or in laying down a proposition to which particular attention is demanded, is exceedingly proper; but, in the ordinary current of discourse, the latter is to be preferred.

With regard to the omission or insertion of the relative, we shall only observe, that in conversation and epistolary writing, it may be often omitted with propriety; but in compositions of a serious and dignified kind, it should constantly be inserted.

With regard to the copulative particle, *and*, which occurs so frequently in all kinds of composition, several observations are to be made. First, it is evident, that the unnecessary repetition of it enfeebles style. It has the same sort of effect, as the frequent use of the vulgar phrase, *and so*, when one is telling a story in common conversation. The following sentence from Sir William Temple, will illustrate this remark. He is speaking of the refinement of the French language: 'The academy set up by Cardinal Richelieu, to amuse the wits of that age and country, and divert them from raking into his politics and ministry, brought this into vogue; and the French wits have, for this last age, been wholly turned to the refinement of their style and language; and, indeed, with such success, that it can hardly be equalled, and runs equally through their verse and their prose.' Here are no fewer than eight *ands* in one sentence. This agreeable writer too often makes his sentences drag in this manner by a careless multiplication of copulatives.

By the unnecessary multiplication of what, is the simplicity of style, also, much injured; and what example is given? Where is the former mode of expression proper; and where not? With regard to the omission and insertion of the relative, what, only, is observed? With regard to the copulative *and*, what is the first observation made; and as what, has it the same effect? What sentence will illustrate this remark; and of what is he speaking? Here are how many *ands*; and what remark follows?

But in the next place, it is worthy of observation, that, by dropping the conjunction, we often mark a closer connection, a quicker succession of objects, than when it is inserted between them. '*Veni, vidi, vici,*'—'I came, I saw, I conquered,' expresses with more spirit, the rapidity and quick succession of conquest, than if connecting particles had been used. When, however, we desire to prevent a quick transition from one object to another, and when we are enumerating objects which we wish to appear as distinct from each other as possible, copulatives may be multiplied with peculiar advantage. Thus Lord Bolingbroke says, with elegance and propriety, 'Such a man might fall a victim to power; but truth, and reason, and liberty, would fall with him.' In the same manner Cæsar describes an engagement with the Nervii; 'The enemy, having easily beat off, and scattered this body of horse, ran down with incredible celerity to the river; so that, almost at one moment of time, they appeared to be in the woods, and in the river, and in the midst of our troops.'

A third rule for promoting the strength of a sentence, is, to dispose of the capital word or words, in that place of the sentence, where they will make the fullest impression. That such capital words there are in every sentence, on which the meaning principally rests, every one must see; and that these words should possess a conspicuous and distinguished place, is equally plain. Perspicuity, then, is the first thing to be studied; and the nature of our language allows no great liberty in the choice of collocation. In general, the important words are placed in the beginning of the sentence. Thus Mr. Addison: 'The pleasures of the imagination, taken in their full extent, are not so gross as those of sense, nor so refined as those of the understanding.' This, indeed, seems the plainest and most natural order, to place that in the front which is the chief object of the proposition we are laying down. Sometimes, however, when we purpose

But in the next place, of dropping the conjunction, what is observed; and by what example is this illustrated? When, however, may copulatives be multiplied with peculiar advantage; and what examples are given from Lord Bolingbroke, and from Cæsar? What is the third rule for promoting the strength of a sentence; and of such capital words, what is observed? Here, what is the first thing to be studied; and of our language, in this respect, what is remarked? In general, where do we place the most important words; and what illustration follows? Though this seems the most natural order, yet what is sometimes requisite; and what illustration is given?

giving weight to a sentence, it is proper to suspend the meaning for a while, and then to bring it out full at the close : 'Thus,' says Mr. Pope, 'on whatever side we contemplate Homer, what principally strikes us, is, his wonderful invention.'

The Greek and Latin writers had a considerable advantage over us in this part of style. By the great liberty of inversion which their languages allowed, they could choose the most advantageous situation for every word ; and had it thereby in their power to give their sentences more force. Milton, in his prose works, and some other of our old English writers, endeavored to imitate them in this. But the forced constructions which they employed, produced obscurity ; and the genius of our language, as it is now written and spoken, will not admit such liberties. Mr. Gordon, who followed this inverted style, in his translation of Tacitus, has sometimes done such violence to the language, as even to appear ridiculous ; as in this expression : 'Into this hole thrust themselves, three Roman senators.' However, within certain bounds, and to a limited degree, our language does admit of inversions ; and they are practised with success by the best writers. For example ; Mr. Pope, speaking of Homer, says, 'The praise of judgment Virgil has justly contested with him, but his invention remains yet unrivalled.'

A fourth rule for constructing sentences with proper strength is, to make the members of them go on rising and growing in their importance above one another. This sort of arrangement is called a climax, and is always considered as a beauty in composition. Why it pleases, is abundantly evident. In all things, we naturally love to ascend to what is more and more beautiful, rather than to follow the retrograde order. Having had once some considerable object set before us, it is with pain we are pulled back to attend to an inferior circumstance. 'Cavendum est,' says Quintilian, 'ne decrescat oratio, et fortiori subjungatur aliquid

What advantage had the Greeks and Latins over us in this part of style ? Who have endeavored to imitate them in this ; how did they succeed ; and why ? What illustration is given from Gordon's translation of Tacitus ? What remark follows ; and what example is given from Mr. Pope ? What is the fourth rule for constructing sentences with proper strength ? What is this sort of arrangement called ; and what is observed of it ? Why does it please ; and what says Quintilian on this subject ?

infirmus.* When a sentence consists of two members, the longest should, in general, be the concluding one. Hence the pronunciation is rendered more easy; and the shortest member of the period being placed first, we carry it more readily in our memory as we proceed to the second, and see the connection of the two more clearly. Thus, to say, 'When our passions have forsaken us, we flatter ourselves with the belief that we have forsaken them,' is both more graceful and more clear, than to begin with the longest part of the proposition: 'We flatter ourselves with the belief, that we have forsaken our passions, when they have forsaken us.' In general, it is always agreeable to find a sentence rising upon us, and growing in its importance to the very last word, when this construction can be managed without affectation, or unseasonable pomp. 'If we rise yet higher,' says Mr. Addison, very beautifully, 'and consider the fixed stars as so many oceans of flame, that are each of them attended with a different set of planets; and still discover new firmaments and new lights, that are sunk farther into those unfathomable depths of æther; we are lost in such a labyrinth of worlds, and confounded with the magnificence and immensity of nature.†'

A fifth rule for the strength of sentences is, to avoid concluding them with an adverb, a preposition, or any inconsiderable word. Such conclusions are always enfeebling and degrading. There are sentences, however, where the stress and significancy rest, chiefly, upon words of this kind. In this case they are not to be considered as circumstances, but as the capital figures; and ought, in propriety, to have the principal place allotted them. No fault, for instance, can be found with this sentence of Bolingbroke: 'In their prosperity, my friends shall never hear of me; in their adversity, always;' where *never* and *always*, being emphatical words,

* We must take care that our composition shall not fall off, and that a weaker expression shall not follow one of greater strength.

† Spect. No. 420.

When a sentence consists of two members, which should be placed first; and why? What constructions illustrate this remark? In general, what is always agreeable; and what example of it is given from Mr. Addison? What is the fifth rule for the strength of sentences? There are sentences, however, of what sort; in this case how are they to be considered; and what follows? What instance is given from Bolingbroke; and here of *never* and *always*, what is remarked?

are so placed, as to make a strong impression. But when those inferior parts of speech are introduced as circumstances, or as qualifications of more important words, they should invariably be disposed of in the least conspicuous parts of the period; and so classed with other words of greater dignity, as to be kept in their proper secondary station.

Agreeably to this rule, we should always avoid concluding with any of those particles, which mark the cases of nouns; as *of, to, from, with, by*. For instance, it is much better to say, 'Avarice is a crime of which wise men are often guilty,' than to say, 'Avarice is a crime which wise men are often guilty of.' This kind of phraseology all correct writers endeavor, with the greatest care, to avoid.

For the same reason, verbs which are used in a compound sense, with some of these prepositions, are likewise ungraceful conclusions of a period; such as *bring about, lay hold of, come over to, clear up*, and many others of the same kind: instead of which, if we can employ a simple verb, it always terminates the sentence with more strength. Even the pronoun *it*, especially when joined with some of the prepositions, as, *with it, in it, to it*, cannot, without a violation of grace, be the conclusion of a sentence. Any phrase which expresses a circumstance only, always brings up the rear of a sentence with a bad grace. Circumstances, are, indeed, like unshapely stones in a building, which try the skill of an artist, where to place them with the least offence. We should carefully avoid crowding too many of them together, but rather intersperse them in different parts of the sentence, joined with the principal words on which they depend. Thus, for instance, when Dean Swift says, 'What I had the honor of mentioning to your Lordship, some time ago, in conversation, was not a new thought.*' These two circumstances, *sometime ago*, and *in conversation*, which are here joined, would have been better separated thus.

* Letter to the Earl of Oxford.

But when should they be disposed of in the least conspicuous parts of the period; and should they be classed with other words? Agreeably to this rule, with what should we always avoid concluding? What example is given; and of this kind of phraseology, what is remarked? For the same reason what verbs are ingracious conclusions to a period; and why? Of the pronoun *it*, as a concluding word, what is remarked; and of any phrase which expresses a circumstance only, what is observed? Circumstances are like what; and what is farther remarked of them? To illustrate this remark, what example is given from Dean Swift; and how should the circumstances have been placed?

‘What I had the honor, some time ago, of mentioning to your Lordship in conversation.’

The last rule which we shall mention relating to the strength of a sentence is, that in the members of it, where two things are compared or contrasted to each other; where either a resemblance or an opposition is designed to be expressed; some resemblance in the language and construction ought to be observed. The following passage from Pope’s preface to his *Homer*, beautifully exemplifies the rule we are now giving. ‘Homer was the greater genius; Virgil, the better artist; in the one, we must admire the man; in the other, the work. Homer hurries us with a commanding impetuosity; Virgil leads us with an attractive majesty. Homer scatters with a generous profusion; Virgil bestows with a careful magnificence. Homer, like the Nile, pours out his riches with a sudden overflow; Virgil, like a river in its bank, with a constant stream. And when we look upon their machines, Homer seems like his own Jupiter in his terrors, shaking Olympus, scattering the lightnings, and firing the heavens; Virgil, like the same power, in his benevolence, counselling with the gods, laying plans for empires, and ordering his whole creation.’ Periods of this kind, when introduced with propriety, and not too frequently repeated, have a sensible and attractive beauty: but if such a construction be aimed at in all our sentences, it leads to a disagreeable uniformity; and produces a regular jingle in the period, which tires the ear, and plainly discovers affectation.

What is the last rule mentioned relating to the strength of a sentence? Repeat the passage from Pope, which beautifully exemplifies this rule. When have periods of this kind a sensible beauty; but if such a construction be aimed at in all our sentences, what will be its effect?

ANALYSIS.

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| <p>1. Strength.</p> <p>A. Redundant words.</p> <p> a. Redundant members.</p> <p>B. Attention to the situation of copulatives, relatives, &c.</p> <p> a. The splitting of particles.</p> <p> b. The multiplication and omission of them.</p> <p> c. The copulative <i>and</i>.</p> | <p>C. The disposition of the capital words in sentences.</p> <p> a. Advantages of the Greek and Latin languages.</p> <p>D. The proper succession of sentences.</p> <p>E. Sentences not to be concluded with adverbs, &c.</p> <p>F. Contrasted sentences.</p> |
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LECTURE XIII.

STRUCTURE OF SENTENCES—HARMONY.

HAVING hitherto treated of sentences, with respect to their meaning, under the heads of perspicuity, unity, and strength; we shall now consider them, with respect to their sound, their harmony, or agreeableness to the ear.

Sound is a quality much inferior to sense; yet such as must not be disregarded. For, as long as sounds are the vehicle of conveyance for our ideas, there will be always a very considerable connection between the idea which is conveyed, and the nature of the sound which conveys it. Pleasing ideas can hardly be transmitted to the mind by means of harsh and disagreeable sounds. The imagination revolts as soon as it hears them uttered. 'Nihil,' says Quintilian, '*potest intrare in affectum, quod in auri, velut quodam vestibulo, statim offendit.*'*

In the harmony of periods, two things may be considered. First, agreeable sounds, or modulation in general, without any particular expression: Next, the sound so ordered as to become expressive of the sense. The first is the more common; the second the higher beauty.

The beauty of musical construction will, evidently, depend upon two things—the choice of words, and the arrangement of them. On the choice of words there is not much to be said, unless we were to enter into a tedious detail of the powers of the several letters, or simple sounds, of which speech is composed. Those words are, doubtless, most pleasing to the ear, which are composed of smooth and liquid sounds, where there is a proper intermixture of vow-

* Nothing can enter into the affections, which stumbles at the threshold by offending the ear.

Under what three heads have we hitherto treated of sentences; and with respect to what, are we now to consider them? Of sound what is remarked; and why must it not be disregarded? Through what can pleasing ideas hardly be transmitted; why; and what says Quintilian? In the harmony of periods, what two things may be considered; and what is observed of them? Upon what two things will the beauty of musical construction depend? On the choice of words, without what detail, is there not much to be said? What words are most pleasing to the ear?

els and consonants ; without too many harsh consonants rubbing against each other ; or too many open vowels in succession, to cause a hiatus, or disagreeable aperture of the mouth. It may always be assumed as a principle, that whatever sounds are difficult in pronunciation, are, in the same proportion, harsh and painful to the ear. Long words are commonly more agreeable than monosyllables. They please the ear by the composition, or succession of sounds which they present to it ; and accordingly the most musical languages abound most in them. Of long words, those are the most musical, which are not wholly composed, either of long or short syllables, but of an intermixture of them ; such as *repent, produce, velocity, independent, impetuosity*.

Though the words, however, which compose a sentence be ever so well chosen, and harmonious, yet, if they be unskilfully arranged, its music is entirely lost. The following sentence from Milton's Treatise on Education, is a remarkable instance of musical construction. 'We shall conduct you to a hill-side, laborious, indeed, at the first ascent ; but else, so smooth, so green, so full of goodly prospects, and melodious sounds, on every side, that the harp of Orpheus was not more charming.' Every thing in this sentence conspires to promote the harmony. The words are happily chosen ; full of liquid and soft sounds ; *laborious, smooth, green, goodly, melodious, charming* : and these so artfully arranged, that were we to alter the collocation of any one of them, we should be immediately sensible of the melody suffering. For, observe, how finely the members of the period swell one above another. 'So smooth, so green'—so full of goodly prospects and melodious sounds on every side ;—till the ear, prepared by this gradual rise, is conducted to that full close on which it rests with pleasure ;—'that the harp of Orpheus was not more charming.'

There are two things on which the music of a sentence chiefly depends. These are, the proper disposition of the several members of it ; and the close or cadence of the whole.

First, we observe, that the distribution of the several

What must always be assumed as a principle ? Why do long words please the ear more than monosyllables ; and, accordingly, what follows ? Of long words which are most musical ; and what examples are given ? Possessing what properties, may the music of a sentence still be lost ? Repeat the following sentence from Milton's Treatise on Education. Of this sentence, what is remarked ; and how is this fully illustrated ? On what two things does the music of a sentence chiefly depend ?

members should be carefully attended to. Whatever is easy and agreeable to the organs of speech, always sounds grateful to the ear. While a period is going on, the termination of each of its members forms a pause in the pronunciation; and these pauses should be so distributed as to make the course of the breathing easy, and, at the same time, should fall at such distances, as to bear a certain musical proportion to each other. This will be best illustrated by examples. The following sentence is from Archbishop Tillotson: 'This discourse, concerning the easiness of God's commands, does, all along, suppose and acknowledge the difficulties of the first entrance upon a religious course; except only in those persons who have had the happiness to be trained up to religion by the easy and insensible degrees of a pious and virtuous education.' This sentence is far from being harmonious; owing chiefly to this—that there is, properly, only one pause in it, falling between the two members into which it is divided; each of which is so long as to require a considerable stretch of the breath in pronouncing it.

Observe, now, on the other hand, the ease with which the following sentence, from Sir William Temple glides along, and the graceful intervals at which the pauses are placed. He is speaking sarcastically of man: 'But, God be thanked, his pride is greater than his ignorance, and what he wants in knowledge, he supplies by sufficiency. When he has looked about him, as far as he can, he concludes there is no more to be seen; when he is at the end of his line, he is at the bottom of the ocean; when he has shot his best, he is sure none ever did, or ever can, shoot better, or beyond him. His own reason he holds to be the certain measure of truth; and his own knowledge, of what is possible in nature.' Here, every thing is, at once, easy to the breath, and grateful to the ear; and it is this sort of flowing measure which renders Sir William Temple's style always agreeable. It must, however, be observed, that if composition abounds with sentences which have too many pauses, and these

How does it appear that the distribution of the several members should be carefully attended to? To illustrate this remark, what sentence is given from Tillotson; what is observed of it, and why is it far from being harmonious? On the other hand, what is remarked of the following sentence from Sir William Temple; and of what is he speaking? Repeat the passage. Here, every thing is of what character; but what must, however, be observed?

placed at intervals too apparently measured and regular, it is apt to savor of affectation.

The next thing to be attended to, is, the close or cadence of the whole sentence. The only important rule that can be given here, is, that when we aim at dignity or elevation, the sound should be made to grow to the last; the largest members of the period, and the fullest and most sonorous words, should be reserved to the conclusion. As an example of this, the following sentence from Mr. Addison may be given. 'It fills the mind,' speaking of sight, 'with the largest variety of ideas; converses with its objects at the greatest distance; and continues the longest in action, without being tired or satiated with its proper enjoyments.' Every reader must be sensible of a beauty there, both in the proper division of the members and pauses, and the manner in which the sentence is rounded, and conducted to a full and harmonious close.

The same thing holds in melody, that was observed to take place with respect to signification—that a falling off at the end of a sentence is very injurious. For this reason, particles, pronouns, and all little words, are as ungracious to the ear, at the conclusion, as they have already been shown to be inconsistent with strength of expression. The sense and sound have here a mutual influence on each other. That which hurts the ear, mars the strength of the meaning also; and that which really degrades the sense, has also a bad sound. An author, speaking of the Trinity, has the following disagreeable sentence. 'It is a mystery which we firmly believe the truth of, and humbly adore the depth of.' And how easily might it be mended by this transposition: 'It is a mystery, the truth of which we firmly believe, and the depth of which we humbly adore.' A musical close in our language seems, in general, to require, either the last syllable, or the last but one, to be a long syllable. Words that consist of short syllables only, as, *contrary*, *particular*,

On the close and cadence of the whole sentence, what is the only important rule that can be given? As an example of this, what sentence from Mr. Addison is given; and in it, of what must every reader be sensible? What is equally true in melody, as in signification; and for this reason, what follows? How does it appear that the sense and sound have here a mutual influence on each other? What illustration is given from an author who is speaking of the Trinity; and how might it be corrected? What does a musical close in our language seem to require? Under what circumstances do words that consist of short syllables only, conclude a sentence harmoniously?

retrospect; seldom conclude a sentence harmoniously, unless a succession of long syllables, before, has rendered them agreeable to the ear.

It is necessary, however, to observe, that sentences so constructed as to make the sound always swell towards the end, and to rest on a long, or a penult long syllable, give a discourse the tone of declamation. If the melody be not varied, the ear soon becomes familiar and is clogged with it. To keep up the attention of the reader or hearer, and to preserve vivacity and strength in our composition, we must, therefore, be very attentive to vary our measure. As this regards the distribution of the members, as well as the cadence of the periods, sentences constructed in a similar manner should never follow one another. Short sentences should be blended with long and swelling ones, to render discourse sprightly, as well as magnificent. Even discord, abrupt sounds, and departure from regular cadence, if properly introduced, have, sometimes, a good effect.

Cicero is one of the most remarkable patterns of a harmonious style, of either ancient or modern times. His love of it, however, is too visible, and the pomp of his numbers sometimes detracts from his strength. But we may observe, in defence of this great orator, that there is a remarkable union in his style, of harmony with ease, which is always a great beauty; and if his harmony be studied, that study appears to have cost him little trouble.

Among our English classics, not many are distinguished for musical arrangement. Milton, in some of his prose works, has very finely turned periods; but the writers of his age indulged in a liberty of inversion, which would now be reckoned contrary to purity of style; and though this allowed their sentences to be more stately and sonorous, yet it gave them too much of Latinised construction and order. Of later writers, Shaftesbury, Addison, Sir William Temple, and Bishop Atterbury, are the most remarkable for the music of their periods.

What, however, is it necessary to observe; and why? To effect what, must we, consequently, be very attentive to our measure; and what remark follows? How should sentences be blended with each other; and even what, sometimes, has a good effect? Of Cicero, in this respect, what is remarked; but in defence of this great orator, what may we observe? In musical arrangement, what is observed of Milton; but in what did the writers of his age indulge; and of this, what is remarked? Of late writers, who are the most remarkable for the music of their periods?

Hitherto we have treated of agreeable sounds, or modulation in general: we now proceed to a higher beauty of this kind—the sound adapted to the sense. Of this we may remark two degrees: First, the current of sound adapted to the tenor of a discourse; next, a particular resemblance effected between some objects and the sounds that are employed in describing it.

First, the current of sound may be adapted to the tenor of a discourse. Sounds have, in many respects, a correspondence with our ideas; partly natural, and partly the effect of artificial associations. Hence, any one modulation of sound continued, stamps upon our style, a certain character and expression. Sentences constructed with the Ciceronian fullness and swell, produce the impression of what is important, magnificent, and sedate: for this is the natural tone which such a course of sentiments assumes. But they suit no violent passion, no eager reasoning, no familiar address: these require brisker, easier, and more concise measures. To swell, and to let down the periods, therefore, as the subject demands, is a very important rule in oratory. It would be as ridiculous to write a familiar epistle, and a funeral oration, in a style of the same cadence, as to set the words of a tender love song to the air of a war-like march.

But, in the next place, besides the general correspondence of the current of sound with the current of thought, a more particular expression may be attempted, of certain objects, by means of resembling sounds. This can be, sometimes, accomplished in prose compositions; but it is chiefly to be looked for in poetry; where attention to sound is more demanded, and where the inversions and liberties of poetical style give us a greater command of sound; assisted, too, by the versification, and that *cantus obscurior*, to which we are naturally led in reading poetry.

The sounds of words may be employed for representing,

Hitherto of what have we treated; and to what do we now proceed? Of this, what two degrees may we remark? With what have sounds, in many respects, a correspondence; and hence, what follows? Of sentences constructed with the Ciceronian fullness and swell, what is observed; and what is a very important rule in oratory? How is this remark illustrated? But in the next place, what is observed? Where can this, sometimes, be accomplished; but where is it chiefly to be looked for; and why? For representing what three classes of objects, may the sounds of words be employed?

chiefly, three classes of objects: First, other sounds; secondly, motions; and, thirdly, the emotions and passions of the mind.

First, by a proper choice of words, we may produce a resemblance of other sounds which we mean to describe; such as the noise of waters, the roaring of winds, or the murmuring of streams. And it will be found, that in most languages, the names of many particular sounds are so formed, as to carry some affinity to the sound which they signify: as, the *whistling* of the wind, the *buz* and *hum* of insects, the *hiss* of serpents, the *crash* of falling timber; and many other instances where the word has been plainly framed upon the sound it represents. A remarkable example of this beauty is found in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, where, in the one passage, he describes the sound made by the opening of the gates of hell; and, in the other, that made by the opening of the gates of heaven. The contrast between the two, exhibits, to great advantage, the art of the poet. The first is the opening of hell's gates:

On a sudden, open fly
With impetuous recoil, and jarring sound,
Th' infernal doors; and on their hinges grate
Harsh thunder.

Observe, now, the smoothness of the other:

Heaven opened wide
Her ever-during gates, harmonious sound,
On golden hinges turning.

The second class of objects, which the sound of words is often employed to imitate, is motion; as it is swift or slow, violent or gentle, easy, or accompanied with effort. Though there is no natural affinity between sound and motion, yet, in the imagination there is a striking one, as is evident from the connection between music and dancing. The poet can, consequently, give us a lively idea of the kind of motion he would describe, by the help of sounds, which correspond, in our imagination, with that motion. Long syllables

First, by a proper choice of words, what resemblance may we produce; and what examples are given? And in most languages what will be found; and what are instances? Where is a remarkable instance of this beauty to be found; and what is observed of it? Repeat the passages. What is the second class of objects which the sound of words, is often employed to imitate; and of this, what is observed? How can the poet, consequently, give us a lively idea of the kind of motion he would describe; and what illustrations follow?

naturally give the impression of slow motion; as in the following line of Virgil:

Olli inter sese magna vi brachia tollunt.

A succession of short syllables present quick motion to the mind: as,

Quadrupedante putrem sonita quatit ungula campum.

The works of Homer and Virgil abound with beauties of this kind; but as they are so often quoted, and so well known, it is unnecessary to produce them here.

The third set of objects, capable of being represented by the sound of words, are the emotions and passions of the mind. Between sense and sound there appears, at first view, to be no natural resemblance; but if the arrangement of syllables, by the sound alone, calls forth one set of ideas more readily than another, and disposes the mind to enter into that affection which the poet intends to raise, such arrangement may, with propriety, be said to resemble the sense, or be similar and correspondent to it. Thus, when pleasure, joy, and agreeable objects, are described by one who sensibly feels his subject, the language naturally runs into smooth, liquid, and flowing numbers; but brisk and lively sensations require the numbers to be quicker and more animated.

Melancholy and gloomy subjects, naturally express themselves in slow measures, and long words: as,

*In those deep solitudes and awful cells,
Where heavenly pensive contemplation dwells.*

Abundant instances of this kind will be suggested by a moderate acquaintance with the good poets, either ancient or modern.

Whose works abound with beauties of this kind; but why is it not necessary to produce them here? What is the third set of objects capable of being represented by the sounds of words; and under this head, what observations are made? Thus, from the descriptions of pleasure, joy, &c., how is this illustrated? How do melancholy and gloomy subjects naturally express themselves; and what example is given? What remark follows?

ANALYSIS.

1. Sounds independent of the sense.
 - A. The choice of words.
 - B. The arrangement of words and sentences.
 - a. The distribution of the members of a sentence.
 - b. The close of a sentence.
2. Sounds adapted to the sense.

- A. Adapted to the tenor of a discourse.
- B. Adapted to the objects described.
 - a. Other sounds.
 - b. Motion.
 - c. Emotions and passions.

LECTURE XIV.

ORIGIN AND NATURE OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE.

HAVING finished what related to the construction of sentences, we proceed to other rules concerning style. Our general division of the qualities of style, was into perspicuity and ornament. Perspicuity, both in single words and phrases, has been considered. Ornament, so far as it arises from a graceful, strong and melodious construction of words, has also been treated of. Another, and a great branch of the ornament of style, is figurative language; to the discussion of which we now proceed.

Figures, in general, always imply some departure from simplicity of expression; the idea which we intend to convey, not only enunciated to others, but enunciated in a particular manner, and with some circumstance added, which is designed to render the impression stronger and more vivid. When we say, for instance, 'That a good man enjoys comfort in the midst of adversity;' we just express our thought in the simplest manner possible. But when we say, 'To the upright there arises light in darkness;' the same sentiment is expressed in a figurative style; a new circumstance is introduced; light is put in the place of comfort, and darkness is used to suggest the idea of adversity. But, though figures imply a deviation from what may be considered the most simple form of speech, we are not thence to conclude, that they imply any thing uncommon or unnatural. This is so far from being the case, that, on many occasions, they are both the most natural, and the most common method of uttering our sentiments. It is impossible to compose any discourse without using them often;

Having finished what related to the construction of sentences, to what do we now proceed? What was our general division of the qualities of style; and how far have they been, respectively, considered? What is another branch of the ornament of style? What do figures, in general, always imply? What instance of illustration is given; and what is remarked of it? But, though figures imply a deviation from the most simple form of speech, what are we not thence to conclude; and why? How is this illustrated?

indeed there are few sentences of any length, in which some expression or other, that may be termed a figure, does not occur. That which has drawn the attention of critics and rhetoricians so much to these forms of speech, is, that in them they remarked much of the beauty and the force of language to consist; and found them always to bear some characters, or distinguishing marks, by the help of which they could reduce them under separate classes and heads. To this circumstance, perhaps, they owe the name of figures.

Figures may be defined to be that language which is prompted either by the imagination, or by the passions. They are generally divided, by rhetoricians, into two great classes—figures of words, and figures of thought. The former are commonly called tropes, and consist in a word's being employed to signify something that is different from its original meaning; so that, if the word be altered, the figure is destroyed. Thus, in the instance before given; 'Light ariseth to the upright in darkness.' Here the trope consists in 'light and darkness,' not being taken literally, but intended to express comfort and adversity; to which conditions of life they are supposed to bear some analogy or resemblance. The other class, called figures of thought, supposes the words to be used literally, and the figure to consist in the sentiment only; as is the case in exclamations, interrogations, apostrophes, and comparisons; where, though the words be varied, or translated from one language into another, the same figure is, notwithstanding, still preserved. This distinction is, however, of small importance, since practice cannot be assisted by it; nor is it, in itself, always very clear.

The first cause of the invention of tropes, was the barrenness of language. The operations of the mind, and of the affections, in particular, are, in most languages, described by words taken from sensible objects. The reason of this

What, then, has drawn the attention of critics and rhetoricians so much to these forms of speech; and to this circumstance what do they owe? How may figures be defined; and how are they generally divided? What are the former commonly called; and in what do they consist? What illustration follows? What does the other class suppose; as is the case in what; and of them, what is remarked? Why, however, is this distinction of small importance? What was the first cause of the invention of tropes? How are the operations of the mind, and affections, in most languages, described; and what is the reason of this?

is manifest: the names of sensible objects were, in all languages, the words earliest introduced; and were, by degrees, extended to those mental objects, of which men had more obscure conceptions, and to which they found it more difficult to assign distinct names. They borrowed, therefore, the name of some sensible idea, where their imagination found an affinity. Thus, we speak of a *piercing* judgment, and a *clear* head; a *soft* or a *hard* heart; a *rough* or a *smooth* behavior. We speak, also, of being *inflamed* by anger, *warmed* by love; *swelled* with pride, *melted* into grief; and these are almost the only significant words which we have for such ideas.

But, though the barrenness of language be one cause of the invention of tropes, yet it is not the only source of this form of speech. Tropes have arisen more frequently from the influence which imagination possesses over language. The imagination never contemplates any one idea as single and alone, but as accompanied by other ideas, which may be considered as its accessaries. These accessaries often affect the imagination more than the principal idea itself. They are, perhaps, in their nature more agreeable, or more familiar to our conceptions; or remind us of a greater variety of important circumstances. Hence the name of the accessory or correspondent idea is employed, although the principal has a proper and well known name of its own. Thus, for example, when we design to intimate the period at which a state enjoyed most reputation and glory, we might easily employ the proper words for expressing this; but as, in our imagination, this is readily connected with the flourishing period of a plant or tree, we prefer this correspondent idea, and say, 'The Roman Empire flourished most under Augustus.' The leader of a faction is plain language; but because the head is the principal part of the human body, and is supposed to direct all the animal operations, we figuratively say, 'Catiline was the head of the party.' The word *voice*, was originally invented to signify the articulate sound, formed by the organs of the mouth; but, as by means of it, men signify their ideas and

What did they, therefore, borrow; and what examples are given? Besides from the barrenness of language, from what, also, have tropes arisen? How does the imagination always contemplate ideas; and how do these accessaries often affect it? What is farther observed of them? Hence what follows; and what examples of illustration are given? How is this farther illustrated from the word *voice*?

their intentions to each other, voice soon assumed many other meanings, all derived from this primary effect. Thus we speak of listening to the *voice* of conscience, the *voice* of nature, and the *voice* of God.

From what has been said, the reason why all languages are most figurative in their early state, is manifest. Language is then most barren: the stock of proper names is small; and, at the same time, imagination exerts great influence over the conceptions of men, and their method of uttering them; so that both from necessity and from choice, their speech will, at that period, abound in tropes: for the savage tribes of men are always much given to wonder and astonishment. Every new object surprises, terrifies, and makes a strong impression on their mind; they are governed by imagination and passion, more than by reason; and, consequently, their speech must be deeply tinged by their genius. But as language gradually advances towards refinement, almost every object comes to have a proper name given to it, and perspicuity and precision are more studied.

We will now proceed to show, why tropes or figures contribute to the beauty and grace of style.

In the first place, they enrich language, and render it more copious. Hence words and phrases are multiplied for expressing all sorts of ideas; for describing even the most minute differences—the most delicate shades and colors of thoughts; which, by proper words alone, could not possibly be expressed.

Secondly, they bestow dignity upon style; which, by the familiarity of common expressions, is degraded. Figurative language, when properly employed, has the same effect upon an elevated subject, that rich and splendid apparel has upon a person of rank and dignity: they adapt the language to the tone of the subject. Assistance of this kind is often requisite in prose compositions; and in poetry, it is indispensable. To say ‘the sun rises,’ is trite and common;

From what has been said, what is manifest; and why is this the case? As the savage tribes of men are always much given to wonder and astonishment, what follows? But when are perspicuity and precision more studied? To show what shall we now proceed? In the first place, what is their effect; and hence words and phrases are multiplied for what purpose? In the second place, how do they improve style; and how is this illustrated? Where is assistance of this kind often requisite; and where, indispensable? What illustration of this remark follows?

but, in the language of Thomson, it becomes a magnificent image :

But yonder comes the powerful king of day,
Rejoicing in the east.

In the third place, figures give us the pleasure of enjoying two objects presented together to our view, without confusion—the principal idea, together with the accessory, which gives it the figurative appearance. We see one thing in another, as Aristotle expresses it, which is always agreeable to the mind. When, for instance, in place of ‘youth’ we say ‘the morning of life,’ the fancy is immediately entertained with all the resembling circumstances which these two objects bear to each other. At the same instant, we behold a certain period of human life, and a certain time of the day, so connected with each other, that the imagination plays between them with pleasure, and contemplates two similar objects in one view, without confusion.

In the fourth place, figures afford a clearer and more striking view of the principal object, than could be had of it were it expressed in simple terms, and divested of its accessory idea. They exhibit the object on which they are employed, in a picturesque form; they can render an abstract conception, in some degree, an object of sense; they surround it with such circumstances, as enable the mind to lay hold of it steadily, and to contemplate it fully. ‘Those persons,’ says Burke, ‘who gain the hearts of most people, who are chosen as the companions of their softer hours, and their reliefs from anxiety and care, are seldom persons of shining qualities, or strong virtues: it is rather the soft green of the soul, on which we rest our eyes, that are fatigued with more glaring objects.’* Here, by a happy allusion to a color, the whole conception is conveyed clear and strong to the mind in one word. By a well chosen figure, conviction even, is assisted, and the impression of a truth upon the mind made more lively and forcible than it

* Treatise on the Sublime and Beautiful.

In the third place, figures give us the pleasure of enjoying what; and what remark follows? From the word *youth*, and the phrase, *the morning of life*, how is this illustrated? In the fourth place, what is their effect; and how is this remark illustrated? What beautiful example is given from Mr. Burke; and what is remarked of it? By a well chosen figure, what effect is produced upon conviction; and what illustration is given from Dr. Young?

would otherwise be. Thus, in the following passage of Dr. Young: 'When we dip too deep in pleasure, we always stir a sediment that renders it impure and noxious.' An image that presents so much resemblance between a moral and a sensible idea, seems like an argument from analogy, to enforce what the author asserts, and to produce conviction.

Whether we desire to raise sentiments of pleasure or aversion, we can always heighten the emotion by the figures which we introduce; leading the imagination to a train, either of agreeable or disagreeable, of exalting or debasing ideas, correspondent to the impression which we seek to make. When we wish to render an object beautiful, or magnificent, we borrow images from all the most beautiful or splendid scenes of nature; we thereby naturally throw a lustre over our object; we enliven the reader's mind, and dispose him to go along with us, in the gay and pleasing impressions which we give him of the subject.

Having thus explained the origin, the nature, and the effects of tropes, we shall next proceed to the several kinds and divisions of them. All, however, that is proposed in this lecture is to give, in a few words, a general view of the several sources whence the tropical meaning of words is derived: after which we shall, in subsequent lectures, descend to a more particular consideration of some of the most important of them, and such as are in most frequent use; in treating of which, we shall endeavor to give all the instruction that may be necessary, concerning the proper employment of figurative language, and point out the errors and abuses which are apt to be committed in this part of style.

All tropes being founded on the relation which one object bears to another, the name of the one can be substituted for that of the other; and by this means, the vivacity of the idea is generally intended to be increased. Of these relations, the relation between a cause and its effect, is one of the first

What is the effect of such an image as is here presented? Whether we desire to raise sentiments of pleasure or aversion, how can we always heighten the emotion by the figures which we introduce; and how is this illustrated? Having thus explained the origin, the nature, and the effect of tropes, to what shall we next proceed? What, only, however, is proposed in this lecture; after which, in subsequent lectures what shall be done? As all tropes are founded on the relation which one object bears to another, what follows; and by this means what is intended to be increased? Of these relations, which is one of the first and most obvious?

and most obvious. Hence, in figurative language, the cause is put for the effect. Thus, Mr. Addison, writing of Italy, says :

Blossoms, and fruits, and flowers, together rise,
And the whole year in gay confusion lies.

Here the 'whole year,' is plainly intended to signify the effects or productions of all the seasons of the year. The effect is also often put for the cause; as 'gray hairs' for 'old age,' which produces gray hairs; and 'shade,' for 'trees,' which cause the shade. The relation which subsists between the container and the thing contained, is, also, so intimate and obvious, as naturally to give rise to tropes :

Ille impiger hausit
Spumantem pateram, et pleno se proluit auro;

Where every one sees that the cup and the gold are put for the liquor that was contained in the golden cup. In the same manner, the name of a country is often used to denote the inhabitants of that country; and to pray for the assistance of Heaven, is the same as to pray for the assistance of God, who is supposed to reside in heaven. The relation between a sign and the thing signified, is another source of tropes. Hence,

Cedant arma togæ; concedat laurea linguae.

The 'toga' being the badge of the civil professions, and the 'laurel' of military honors, the badge of each is put for the civil and military characters themselves. To 'assume the sceptre,' is a common phrase for entering on royal authority. To tropes, founded on these several relations of cause and effect, container and contained, sign and thing signified, is given the name Metonymy.

When the trope is founded on the relation between an antecedent and a consequent, it is called a Metalepsis; as when the Romans used to say, 'fuit,' or 'vixit,' to signify

Hence what follows; and what example is given? Here 'the whole year,' is intended to signify what? What instances are mentioned in which the effect is put for the cause? Of the relation between the container and the thing contained, what is remarked; what example is given, and what is observed of it? What is another source of tropes; what is the example; and what is remarked of it? What other examples of tropes of the same kind are mentioned; and to all these what general name is given? When is a trope called a metalepsis; and what is the example?

that one was dead. 'Fuit Ilium et ingens gloria Dardanidum,' signifies, that the glory of Troy is now no more.

When the whole is put for a part, or a part for the whole; a genus for a species, or a species for a genus; the singular number for the plural, or the plural for the singular; in general, when any thing more, or any thing less, is put for the precise object meant, the figure is then called a Synecdoche. It is very common, for instance, to say, 'a fleet of so many sail,' in the place of 'ships;' or to use the 'head' for the 'person,' the 'pole' for the 'earth,' the 'waves,' for the 'sea.' In the same manner an attribute may be put for a subject; and 'youth and beauty,' for 'the young and beautiful;' and sometimes, a subject for its attribute. But it is unnecessary to insist longer on this enumeration. Enough has been said to give an opening into that great variety of relations between objects, by means of which, the mind is assisted to pass easily from one to another; and understands, by the name of the one, the other to be meant. But the relation of similitude and resemblance, which is far the most fruitful in tropes, is yet to be mentioned. On this is founded what is called the metaphor; when, instead of using the proper name of any object, we employ, in its place, the name of some other, which is like it; which is a sort of picture of it, and which thereby awakens the conception of it with more force or grace. This, therefore, shall be fully considered in the next lecture.

When is the figure called a Synecdoche; and what instances are mentioned? In the same manner what may be done; but why is it unnecessary to insist longer on this enumeration? But what relation is yet to be mentioned; on this is formed what figure; and what is remarked of it?

ANALYSIS.

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| 1. General remarks. | B. They render it more dignified. |
| 2. Definitions of figures. | C. They present the principal object with its accessory. |
| A. Figures of words. | D. They render our views more distinct. |
| B. Figures of thought. | 5. Different kinds of figures. |
| 3. Origin of figures. | A. Metonymy. |
| A. The influence of the imagination over language. | B. Metalepsis. |
| 4. Languages most figurative at their origin. | C. Synecdoche. |
| 5. The advantages of figures. | |
| A. They enrich language. | |

LECTURE XV.

METAPHOR.

FROM the preliminary observations made, concerning figurative language in general, we now proceed to treat separately of such figures of speech, as occur most frequently, and require particular attention. The first to be discussed is the metaphor. This figure is founded entirely on the resemblance which one object bears to another. Hence it is closely allied to simile or comparison, and differs only from it in being expressed in an abridged form. When we say of a great minister, 'that he upholds the state, like a pillar which supports the weight of a whole edifice,' we evidently make a comparison; but when we say of such a minister, 'that he is the pillar of the state,' it becomes a metaphor. The comparison betwixt the minister and a pillar is made in the mind; but is expressed without any of the words that denote comparison. The comparison is only insinuated, not expressed: the one object is supposed to be so like the other, that without formally drawing the comparison, the name of the one may be put in the place of the name of the other. 'The minister is the pillar of the state.' This, therefore, is a more lively and animated manner of expressing the resemblances which the imagination traces among objects.

Of all the figures of speech, none approaches so near to painting as the metaphor. Its peculiar effect is to give light and strength to description; to make intellectual ideas, in some degree, visible to the eye, by giving them color, and substance, and sensible qualities. To produce this effect, however, a delicate hand is required; for, by a very little inaccuracy, we are in danger of introducing confusion, instead of promoting perspicuity. Several rules, therefore,

From the preliminary observations made concerning figurative language in general, of what do we now proceed to treat? Which is the first to be discussed; on what is it founded; and hence what follows? How is this illustrated? Of the comparison between the pillar and the minister, what is farther observed? To what does this figure approach; and what is its peculiar effect? To produce this effect, however, what is requisite; and why?

are necessary for the proper management of metaphors. But, before we enter upon these, it may be proper to give one instance of a very beautiful metaphor, that the figure may appear to full advantage. The instance is taken from Lord Bolingbroke's remarks on the History of England. Just at the conclusion of his work, speaking of the behavior of Charles I. to his last parliament, he says, 'In a word, about a month after their meeting, he dissolved them; and, as soon as he had dissolved them he repented; but he repented too late of his rashness. Well might he repent; for the vessel was now full, and this last drop made the waters of bitterness to overflow.' 'Here,' he adds, 'we draw the curtain, and put an end to our remarks.' Nothing could be more happily thrown off. The metaphor is continued through several expressions. The *vessel* is put for the state, or temper of the nation, already *full*, that is, provoked to the highest degree, by former oppressions and wrongs; this *last drop* stands for the provocation recently received by the abrupt dissolution of the parliament; and the *overflowing of the waters of bitterness*, forcibly expresses all the effects of resentment, let loose by an exasperated people.

Proceeding, now, to the rules to be observed in the proper management of metaphors, the first one to be mentioned is, that they be suited to the nature of the subject of which we treat; neither too numerous, nor too gay, nor too elevated for it; that we neither attempt to force the subject, by means of them, into a degree of elevation which is not congruous to it; nor, on the other hand, allow it to sink below its proper dignity. Some metaphors are beautiful in poetry, which would be absurd and unnatural in prose; some may be graceful in orations, which would be very improper in historical or philosophical compositions. Figures, it must be remembered, are the dress of our sentiments: and as there is a natural congruity between dress, and the character, or rank, of the person who wears it, a violation of which congruity never fails to be displeasing; the same is true in the

Before we enter upon the rules for the management of this figure, what is proposed to be done; and why? Whence is the instance taken; and what is it? Of this metaphor what is remarked; and how is this illustrated? In the proper management of the metaphor, what is the first rule to be observed? Of the proper appropriation of metaphors to different kinds of composition, what is remarked? As figures are the dress of our sentiments, what follows; and to what must they, therefore, be carefully adapted?

application of figures to sentiment. They should, therefore, be carefully adapted to the character of the style which they are intended to adorn.

The second rule given, respects the choice of objects whence metaphors are to be drawn. The field of figurative language is very wide. All nature opens its stores to us, and allows us to gather, from all sensible objects, whatever can illustrate intellectual or moral ideas. Not only the gay and splendid objects of sense, but the grave, the terrifying, and even the gloomy and dismal, may, on different occasions, be introduced into figures with propriety. But care must be taken not to use such allusions as raise in the mind disagreeable, mean, or low ideas. Even when metaphors are chosen in order to vilify and degrade an object, an author should study never to be low or vulgar in his allusions. Dean Swift's treatise on the Art of Sinking, contains a full and humorous collection of instances of this kind, wherein authors, instead of exalting, have contrived to degrade their subjects by the figures they employed. Indeed, authors of distinction sometimes fall into this error. Shakspeare, whose imagination was more remarkable for its richness and boldness, than for its delicacy, often fails here. The following, for example, is a gross transgression. In his Henry V., having mentioned a dunghill, he immediately raises a metaphor from the steam of it; and on a subject too that naturally led to much nobler ideas :

And those that leave their valiant bones in France,
Dying like men, though buried in your dunghills,
They shall be fam'd; for there the sun shall greet them,
And draw their honors reeking up to heaven.

In the third place, particular care should be taken that the resemblance, which is the foundation of the metaphor, be clear and perspicuous; not far fetched, nor difficult to be discovered. The transgression of this rule forms, what are called harsh, or forced metaphors, which are always displeasing, because they puzzle the reader, and, instead of

What does the second rule given, respect? Of the extent of the field of figurative language, what is remarked; and what illustration of this remark follows? But about what must care be taken? What work contains a humorous collection of instances of this kind; and what is remarked of them? Authors of what character sometimes fall into this error; and what instance is given illustrative of this remark? In the third place, about what should particular care be taken? What does the transgression of this rule form; and why are they always displeasing?

illustrating the thought, render it perplexed and intricate. With metaphors of this kind, Cowley, and some other writers of his age, abound. How forced and obscure, for instance, are the following verses of the former, in which he is speaking of his mistress :

Wo to her stubborn heart, if once mine come
 Into the selfsame room,
 'Twill tear and blow up all within,
 Like a grenado, shot into a magazine.
 Then shall love keep the ashes and torn parts
 Of both our broken hearts ;
 Shall out of both one new one make ;
 From her's th' alloy, from mine the metal take ;
 For of her heart, he from the flames will find
 But little left behind ;
 Mine only, will remain entire ;
 No dross was there to perish in the fire.

Metaphors borrowed from any of the sciences, especially such of them as belong to particular professions, are, by their obscurity, always faulty.

In the fourth place, we must be careful never to jumble metaphorical and plain language together ; never to construct a period in such a manner, that part of it is to be understood metaphorically, and part, literally. This always produces a most disagreeable confusion. Instances of the violation of this rule are frequent, even in good authors. In Mr. Pope's translation of the *Odyssey*, Penelope, bewailing the abrupt departure of her son Telemachus, is made to speak thus :

Long to my joys my dearest lord is lost,
 His country's buckler, and the Grecian boast,
 Now from my fond embrace by tempests torn,
 Our other column of the state is borne,
 Nor took a kind adieu, nor sought consent.

Here, in one line, her son is figured as a column ; and in the next, he returns to a person, to whom it belongs to take adieu, and to ask consent. This is inconsistent. The poet should either have kept himself to the idea of man in the literal sense ; or, if he figured him by a column, he should have

Who abound with metaphors of this kind ; and from the former, what example is given ? What metaphors are, by their obscurity, always faulty ? In the fourth place, about what must we be careful ; and what does this always produce ? Where are instances of the violation of this rule frequent ; and what example is given from Mr. Pope's translation of the *Odyssey* ? Of this passage, what is remarked ; and what should the poet have done ?

ascribed nothing to him but what belonged to it. He was not at liberty to ascribe to that column the actions and properties of a man. Such unnatural mixtures render the image indistinct; leaving it to waver, in our conceptions, between the figurative and the literal sense.

Though the works of Ossian abound with beautiful and correct metaphors, yet they afford one instance of the fault we are now censuring. 'Trothal went forth with the stream of his people, but they met a rock; for Fingal stood unmoved: broken they rolled back from his side. Nor did they roll in safety; the spear of the king pursued their flight.' The metaphor, at the beginning, is exceedingly beautiful. The 'stream,' the 'unmoved rock,' the 'waves rolling back broken,' are expressions agreeable to the proper and consistent language of figure; but, in the conclusion, when we are told, 'they did not roll in safety, because the spear of the king pursued their flight,' the literal meaning is injudiciously mixed with the metaphor; they are, at the same moment, represented as waves that *roll*, and as men that may be *pursued* and *wounded with a spear*.

In the fifth place, we must be careful not to make two different metaphors meet on the same object. This is what is called mixed metaphor, and is one of the grossest abuses of this figure. Shakspeare's expression, for example, 'to take up arms against a sea of troubles,' makes a most unnatural medley, and entirely confounds the imagination. Quintilian has carefully guarded us against it. 'We must be particularly attentive,' says he, 'to end with what we have begun. Some, when they begin the figure with a tempest, conclude it with a conflagration; which forms a shameful inconsistency.' Observe, for instance, what an inconsistent group of objects is brought together by Shakspeare, in the following passage of the Tempest; speaking of persons recovering their judgment after the enchantment which held them was dissolved:

The charm dissolves apace,
And as the morrow steals upon the night,

To do what, was he not at liberty; and of such unnatural mixtures, what is remarked? What is observed of the works of Ossian; yet of what do they afford one instance? What is it; and what is remarked of it? In the fifth place, about what must we be careful? What is this called; and what is said of it? What is remarked of Shakspeare's expression, 'To take up arms against a sea of trouble;' and what says Quintilian on this subject? What passage is here introduced from Shakspeare's Tempest; and what is observed of it?

Melting the darkness, so their rising senses
 Begin to chase the ignorant fumes that mantle
 Their clearer reason.

So many ill sorted things are here joined, that the mind can see nothing clearly—the morning *stealing* upon the darkness, and at the same time, *melting* it—the senses of men *chasing fumes, ignorant fumes, and fumes that mantle*.

More correct writers than Shakspeare, sometimes fall into this error of mixing metaphors. It is surprising that the following should have escaped Mr. Addison, in his letter from Italy:

I bridle in my struggling muse with pain,
 That longs to launch into a bolder strain.

The muse, figured as a horse, may be *bridled*; but when we speak of *launching*, we make it a ship; and by no force of imagination, can it be supposed both a horse and a ship at the same time—*bridled* to hinder it from *launching*. The same author, in one of his numbers in the Spectator, says, 'There is not a single view of human nature, which is not sufficient to extinguish the seeds of pride.' Nothing could be more incoherent than the things here joined together; making 'a view extinguish, and extinguish seeds.'

It is a good rule for examining the propriety of metaphors, when we doubt whether or not they are of the mixed kind, to try to form a picture upon them, and consider how the parts would agree, and what sort of figure the whole would present, when delineated with a pencil. By this means, we should become sensible, whether inconsistent circumstances were mixed, and a monstrous image thereby produced; or whether the object was, all along, presented in one natural and consistent point of view.

Metaphors, in the sixth place, should not be crowded together on the same object. Though each of the metaphors be preserved distinct, yet, if they be heaped on one another, they produce confusion. The following lines from Francis' translation of Horace, will exemplify this remark:

Of warm commotions, wrathful jars,
 The growing seeds of civil wars;

That more correct writers than Shakspeare, sometimes fall into this error, what evidence is given; and on this passage, what remarks are made? What says the same author in one of his numbers of the Spectator; and what is observed of it? What rule is given for examining the propriety of metaphors; and by this means, of what should we become sensible? Of metaphors in the sixth place, what is remarked; and why should not this be done? What lines will exemplify this remark?

Of double fortune's cruel games,
 The spacious means, the private aims,
 And fatal friendships of the guilty great,
 Alas! how fatal to the Roman state!
 Of mighty legions late subdu'd,
 And arms with Latian blood embru'd;
 Yet unatoned, a labor vast!
 Doubtful the die, and dire the cast!
 You treat adventurous, and incautious tread,
 On fires with faithless embers overspread.

This passage, though highly poetical, is, still, harsh and obscure; owing to this cause only, that three distinct metaphors are crowded together to describe the difficulty of Pollio's writing a history of the civil wars. The mind finds it difficult to pass through so many different views, given in quick succession, of the same object.

The seventh, and last rule, which we shall suggest concerning metaphors, is, that they be not too far pursued. If the resemblance on which the figure is founded, be long dwelt upon, and carried into all its minute circumstances, we produce an allegory instead of a metaphor; we tire the reader, who soon becomes weary of this play of fancy; and we render our discourse obscure. This is called straining a metaphor. Cowley deals in this to excess; and to this error is owing, in a great measure, that intricacy and harshness, in his figurative language, which was before noticed. Dr. Young, also, often violates this rule. The merit, however, of this writer, in figurative language, is great, and deserves to be remarked. No writer, ancient or modern, had a stronger imagination than Dr. Young, or one more fertile in figures of every kind. His metaphors are often new, and often natural and beautiful. But his imagination was strong and rich, rather than delicate and correct. Hence, in the style of his *Night Thoughts*, much obscurity and hardness are observed. Thus, speaking of old age, he says, it should

Walk thoughtful on the silent, solemn shore
 Of that vast ocean, it must sail so soon;

Though this passage is highly poetical, yet why is it still harsh and obscure; and what remark follows? What is the last rule suggested concerning metaphors; and if the resemblance be long dwelt upon, what will be the consequence? What is this called; and what results from the frequent use of it, in Cowley's metaphors? What eminent poet often violates this rule; yet of his merit in figurative language, what is observed? Of his imagination, what is remarked; and hence, in the style of his *Night Thoughts*, what is observed? Thus, speaking of old age, what does he say; and of this passage what is remarked?

And put good works on board ; and wait the wind
That shortly blows us into worlds unknown.

The first two lines are extremely beautiful ; but when he continues the metaphor, 'to putting good works on board, and waiting the wind,' it becomes strained, and sinks in dignity. Of all the English authors, no one, perhaps, is so happy in his metaphors as Mr. Addison. His imagination was neither so rich nor so strong as Dr. Young's ; but it was far more chaste and delicate. Perspicuity, natural grace and ease, always distinguish his figures. They are neither harsh nor strained : they never appear to have been studied or sought after ; but seem to rise, of their own accord, from the subject, and constantly embellish it.

Having treated thus fully of the metaphor, we shall conclude this lecture with a few remarks concerning the allegory.

An allegory may be regarded as a continued metaphor ; as it is the representation of some one thing by another that resembles it, and that is made to stand for it. As a fine example of this figure, we may take the following passage from the 80th Psalm ; where the people of Israel are represented under the image of a vine, and the figure is supported throughout with great correctness and beauty. 'Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt, thou hast cast out the heathen and planted it. Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it ; and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars. She sent out her boughs into the sea, and her branches into the river. Why hast thou broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her ! The boar out of the wood doth waste it ; and the wild beast of the field doth devour it. Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts, look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine !' Here there is no circumstance, except, perhaps, one phrase at the beginning, 'thou hast cast out the heathen,' that does not strictly agree to a vine, whilst, at

Of all the English authors, who was the most happy in his metaphors ; and of his imagination, and his figures, what is farther observed ? Having treated thus fully of the metaphor, with what is this lecture concluded ? How may an allegory be regarded ; and why ? Where is a fine example of this figure found ; and what is it ? Here, of all the circumstances, what is remarked ; and what is the principal requisite in the conduct of an allegory ?

the same time, the whole graduates happily with the Jewish state represented by this figure. This is the first and principal requisite in the conduct of an allegory, that the figurative and the literal meaning be not mixed inconsistently together.

The same rules that were given for metaphors, may be applied to allegories also, on account of the affinity that subsists between them. The only material difference, besides the one being short, and the other prolonged, is, that a metaphor always explains itself by the words that are connected with it, in their proper and natural signification : As when we say, ' Achilles was a lion ; ' ' an able minister is the pillar of the state.' The lion and the pillar are here sufficiently interpreted by the mention of Achilles and the minister, which are joined to them ; but an allegory may be allowed to stand less connected with the literal meaning ; the interpretation not being so plainly pointed out, but left to our own reflection.

Why may the same rules that were given for metaphors, be applied to allegories ? What is the only material difference between them ? How is this remark illustrated ?

ANALYSIS.

1. Metaphor.

- A. The difference between it and the comparison.
- B. Its approximation to painting.
- C. Rules for conducting metaphors.
 - a. To be suited to the subject.
 - b. To be drawn for suitable objects.
 - c. The resemblance to be clear and perspicuous.

d. Metaphorical and plain language not to be jumbled together.

- e. Two metaphors not to meet on the same objects.
- f. Different metaphors not to be crowded together.
- g. Metaphors not to be too far pursued.

2. Allegory.

- A. Its nature illustrated.

LECTURE XVI.

HYPERBOLE—PERSONIFICATION—APOSTROPHE.

THE next figure of which we are to treat, is hyperbole, or exaggeration. It consists in magnifying an object beyond its natural bounds. It occurs very frequently in all languages, and forms a part of common conversation: as swift as the wind; as white as snow; and the like: and our usual forms of compliment, are, in general, only extravagant hyperboles. If any thing is remarkably good or great in its kind, we are instantly ready to add to it some exaggerating epithet; and to make it the best we ever saw. The imagination has always a tendency to gratify itself, by magnifying its present object, and carrying it to excess. This hyperbolical turn will prevail in language, in proportion to the liveliness of imagination of the people who speak it. Hence, young persons always deal much in hyperboles. Hence, too, the language of the orientals was far more hyperbolical than that of the Europeans, who are of more phlegmatic, or, perhaps, of more correct imaginations.

The exaggerated expressions to which our ears are accustomed in conversation, scarcely strike us as hyperboles. We immediately make the proper abatement, and understand them according to their just value. But when there is something striking or unusual in the form of a hyperbolical expression, it then rises into a figure of speech which draws our attention: and here it is necessary to observe, that, unless the reader's imagination be in such a state as disposes it to rise and swell along with the hyperbolical expression, he is always offended by it. For a sort of disagreeable force is put upon him; he is required to strain and exert his fancy, when he feels no inclination to make

Of what figure are we next to treat; and in what does it consist? Where does it frequently occur; what does it form, and what examples are given? If any thing is remarkably good or great, to what are we inclined; and why? In proportion to what will this hyperbolical turn prevail; and hence what follows? What scarcely strike us as hyperboles; and why? But when does it rise into a figure of speech; and here what is necessary to observe; and why?

any such effort. Hence the hyperbole is a figure of difficult management; and ought not to be frequently used, or dwelt upon long.

Hyperboles are of two kinds; either such as are employed in description, or such as are suggested by the warmth of passion. Those are by far the best, which are the effect of passion: for if the imagination has a tendency to magnify its objects beyond their natural proportion, passion possesses this tendency in a vastly stronger degree; and, therefore, not only excuses the most daring figures, but very often renders them natural and just. Hence, the following sentiments of Satan in Milton, as strongly as they are described, contain nothing but what is natural and proper; exhibiting the picture of a mind agitated with rage and despair.

Me, miserable! which way shall I fly
Infinite wrath, and infinite despair?
Which way I fly is hell, myself am hell;
And in the lowest depth, a lower deep
Still threat'ning to devour me, opens wide,
To which the hell I suffer seems a heaven.

In simple description, hyperboles must be used with greater caution, and require more preparation in order to make the mind relish them. When a poet is describing an earthquake or a storm; or when our imagination carries us into the midst of a battle, we can bear strong hyperboles without displeasure. But when only a woman in grief is presented to our view, it is impossible not to be disgusted with such wild exaggeration as the following, in one of our dramatic poets:

————— I found her on the floor
In all the storm of grief, yet beautiful;
Pouring forth tears at such a lavish rate,
That were the world on fire, they might have drowned
The wrath of Heaven, and quench'd the mighty ruin. LEE.

This is mere bombast. The person herself who was under the distracting agitations of grief, might be permitted to hyperbolize strongly; but the spectator describing her,

Hence, of the hyperbole, what is farther remarked? Hyperboles are of what two kinds? Which are the best; and why? Hence, of the following sentiments of Satan, what is observed? Repeat the passage. Where must hyperboles be used with greater caution; and what do they then require? When can we bear strong hyperboles without displeasure; but when do we become disgusted? Repeat the example. Of this passage what is remarked?

cannot be allowed an equal liberty ; for the one is supposed to utter the language of passion, the other speaks the language of description only—which is always according to the dictates of nature, on a lower tone. The exact boundary of this figure cannot be ascertained by any precise rule. Good sense and accurate taste must determine the point, beyond which, if we pass, we become extravagant.

Of figures, which lie altogether in the thought, where the words are taken in their common and literal sense, the first place is due to personification, or that figure by which we attribute life and action to inanimate objects.

The use of this figure is very extensive, and its foundation is laid deep in human nature. At first view, and when considered abstractly, it would appear to be a figure of the utmost boldness, and to border on the extravagant and ridiculous. For what can seem more remote from the tract of reasonable thought, than to speak of stones and trees, and fields and rivers, as if they were living creatures, and to attribute to them thought and sensation, affections and actions. In fact, however, the case is very different. All poetry, even in its most gentle and humble forms, abounds with it. From prose, and, indeed, even from common conversation, it is far from being excluded. When we say, the ground *thirsts* for rain, or the earth *smiles* with plenty ; or when we speak of ambition as *restless*, or a disease as *deceitful*, such expressions show the facility with which the mind accommodates the properties of living creatures to things that are inanimate, or to abstract conceptions of our own forming.

There is, indeed, a wonderful proneness in human nature to animate all objects. Let a man by an unwary step sprain his ankle, or hurt his foot upon a stone, and in the ruffled, discomposed moment, he will sometimes feel disposed to break the stone in pieces, and to utter passionate exclamations against it, as if it had done him an injury. If one has been long accustomed to a certain set of objects, which have

Of the exact boundary of this figure, what is observed ; and what must determine the point ? Of figures which lie altogether in the thought, to what is the first place due ? Of the use of this figure what is remarked ; and where is its foundation laid ? At first view how would it appear ; and why ? How does it appear that, in fact, the case is quite different ? What examples of illustration are given ; and what is remarked of them ? How does it appear that there is a wonderful proneness in human nature to animate all objects ? From a certain set of particular objects, how is this remark farther illustrated ?

made a strong impression upon his imagination; as a house where he has passed many agreeable years; or fields, and trees, and mountains, among which he has often walked with the greatest delight; when he is obliged to part with them, especially if he has no prospect of ever seeing them again, he can scarcely avoid having somewhat of the same feeling as when he is leaving old friends. They seem endowed with life; they become objects of his affections; and in the moment of parting, it scarcely seems absurd to him, to give vent to his feelings in words, and to take a formal adieu.

There are three different degrees of this figure; which it is requisite to remark and distinguish, in order to determine the propriety of its use. The first is, when some of the properties or qualities of living creatures are ascribed to inanimate objects; the second, when those inanimate objects are described as acting like such as have life; and the third, when they are represented either as speaking to us, or as listening to what we say to them.

The first and lowest degree of this figure, which consists in communicating to inanimate objects some of the qualities of living creatures, raises the style so little, that the humblest discourse will admit it without any force. Thus a 'raging storm, a deceitful disease, a cruel disaster,' are familiar and simple expressions. This, indeed, is so obscure a degree of personification, that it might, perhaps, with propriety, be classed with those plain metaphors that almost escape our observation.

The second degree of this figure is, when we introduce inanimate objects acting like those that have life. Here we rise a step higher, and the personification becomes sensible. According to the nature of the action which we ascribe to those inanimate objects, and the particularity with which we describe it, is the strength of the figure. When pursued to any length, it belongs to labored harangues; when slightly touched, it may be admitted into less elevated compositions. Cicero, for instance, speaking of the cases where killing a

How many different degrees of this figure are there; and why must they be distinguished? What are they? Of the first and lowest degree of this figure, what is observed? What examples are given; and what remark follows? What is observed of the second degree of this figure; and according to what is the strength of it? When does it belong to labored harangues; and what is observed of it when slightly touched? What illustration of this is given from Cicero; and what is remarked of it?

man is lawful in self-defence, uses the following words: 'Aliquando nobis gladius ad occidendum hominem ad ipsis porrigitur legibus.*' Here the laws are beautifully personified, as stretching forth their hand to give us a sword for putting a man to death.

In poetry, personifications of this kind are extremely frequent, and are, indeed, the life and soul of it. In the descriptions of a poet who has a lively fancy, every thing becomes animated. Homer, the father of poetry, is remarkable for the use of this figure. War, peace, darts, rivers, every thing; in short, is alive in his writings. In this particular, Milton and Shakspeare resemble him. No personification, in any author, is more striking, or introduced more appropriately, than the following of Milton, upon Eve's eating the forbidden fruit:

So saying, her rash hand, in evil hour,
Forth reaching to the fruit, she plucked, she ate;
Earth felt the wound; and nature from her seat
Sighing, through all her works, gave signs of wo
That all was lost.

B. ix. l. 780.

All the circumstances and ages of men—poverty, riches, youth, old age—all the dispositions and passions—melancholy, love, grief, contentment, are capable of being personified in poetry, with great propriety. Of this we meet with frequent examples in Milton's *Allegro* and *Penseroso*, Parnell's *Hymn to Contentment*, and Thomson's *Seasons*: nor, indeed, is it easy, in poetic compositions, to set any bounds to personifications of this kind.

The third and highest degree of this figure remains to be mentioned—when inanimate objects are introduced, not only as feeling and acting, but as speaking to us, or hearing and attending when we address ourselves to them. This, though on several occasions far from being unnatural, is, plainly, the boldest of all rhetorical figures: it is the style of strong passion only; and, therefore, never to be attempted, unless when the mind is considerably heated and agitated.

* *Orat. pro Milone.*

Where are personifications of this kind extremely frequent; and there what is observed of them? Of Homer, Milton, and Shakspeare, what is remarked; and from Milton, what illustration is given? All of what are capable of being personified in poetry with great propriety; and of this, where do we meet with frequent examples? What is the third and highest degree of this figure; and what is observed of it?

A slight personification of some inanimate thing, acting as if it had life, can be relished by the mind, in the midst of cool description, and when its ideas are going on in the ordinary train. But it must be in a state of violent emotion, and have departed considerably from its common track of thought, before it can so far realize the personification of an insensible object, as to conceive it listening to what we say, or making any return to us. All strong passions, however, have a tendency to use this figure; not only love, anger, and indignation, but even those which are seemingly more dispiriting, such as grief, remorse, and melancholy. Milton affords us an extremely fine example, in that moving and tender address which Eve makes to Paradise, just before she is compelled to leave it.

Oh! unexpected stroke, worse than of death!
Must I thus leave thee, Paradise! thus leave
Thee, native soil, these happy walks, and shades,
Fit haunt of gods! where I had hope to spend
Quiet, though sad, the respite of that day,
Which must be mortal to us both. O flowers!
That never will in other climate grow,
My early visitation and my last
At even, which I bred up with tender hand,
From your first opening buds, and gave you names!
Who now shall rear you to the sun, or rank
Your tribes, and water from th' ambrosial fount? B. xi. l. 268.

This is altogether the language of nature, and of female passion. As all plaintive passions are peculiarly prone to the use of this figure, it should be remarked, that there are frequent examples, not in poetry only, but in real life, of persons when just about to suffer death, taking a passionate farewell of the sun, moon, and stars, or other sensible objects around them.

In the management of this sort of personification, two rules are to be observed. First, never to attempt it unless prompted by strong passion, and never to continue it when the passion begins to flag. The second rule is, never to

When can a slight personification of some inanimate thing be relished; but to what state must the mind be brought, before it can realize the personification of an inanimate object, so as to listen and answer to what we say? What passions have a tendency to use this figure; and what examples are given? In what does Milton afford us an extremely fine example; and what is it? Of this passage what is remarked? As all plaintive passions are peculiarly prone to the use of this figure, what should be remarked? In the management of this sort of personification, what two rules are to be observed?

personify any object which has not some dignity in itself, and which is incapable of making a proper figure in the elevation to which we raise it. To address the remains of a deceased friend, is natural; but to address the clothes which he wore, introduces low and degrading ideas. So, also, addressing the several parts of one's body as if they were animated, is not congruous to the dignity of passion. For this reason, the following passage in Mr. Pope's *Eloisa* to *Abelard*, must be condemned:

Dear fatal name! rest ever unrevealed,
Nor pass these lips in holy silence sealed.
Hide it, my heart, within that close disguise,
Where, mixed with God's, his loved idea lies;
Oh! write it not, my hand!—his name appears
Already written:—Blot it out, my tears.

Here the name of *Abelard* is first personified; which, as the name of a person often stands for the person himself, is exposed to no objection. Next, *Eloisa* personifies her own heart; and as the heart is a dignified part of the human frame, and is often put for the mind or affections, this also may pass without censure. But when she addresses her hand, and tells it not to write his name, this is strained and unnatural. Yet the figure becomes still worse, when she exhorts her tears to blot out what her hand had written. There is, indeed, in the last two lines, an air of epigrammatic conceit, which native passion never suggests; and which is altogether unsuitable to the tenderness which breathes through the rest of that inimitable poem.

Apostrophe is a figure so similar to personification, that it will require but little discussion. It is an address to a real person, but one who is either absent or dead, as if he were present and listening to us. It is so nearly allied to an address to inanimate objects personified, that both these figures are sometimes called apostrophes. The proper apostrophe is, however, in boldness, one degree lower than the address to personified objects; for it certainly requires a less effort of imagination to suppose persons present who are dead or absent, than to animate insensible beings, and direct our

To address what is natural; but what introduces low and degrading ideas? So also, what is not congruous with the dignity of passion; and for this reason, what passage must be condemned? On this passage, what remarks follow? Of the last two lines, what is observed? Of apostrophe what is remarked; and what is it? Why, however, is the proper apostrophe, in boldness, one degree lower than the address to personified objects?

discourse to them. Both figures are subject to the same rule of being prompted by passion, in order to render them natural; for both are the language of passion or strong emotion only. The poems of Ossian abound with the most beautiful instances of this figure. 'Weep on the rocks of roaring winds, O maid of Inistore! Bend thy fair head over the waves, thou fairer than the ghost of the hills, when it moves in a sunbeam at noon over the silence of Morven! He is fallen! thy youth is lone; pale beneath the sword of Cuchullin.'

For such bold figures of discourse as strong personifications, addresses to personified objects, and apostrophes, the glowing imagination of the ancient oriental nations was particularly fitted. Hence, in the sacred scriptures, we find some very remarkable instances: 'O thou sword of the Lord! how long will it be ere thou be quiet? put thyself up in thy scabbard; rest, and be still! How can it be quiet, seeing the Lord hath given it a charge against Ashkelon, and against the sea-shore? there he hath appointed it.' There is a passage in the fourteenth chapter of Isaiah, where the prophet is describing the fall of the Assyrian empire, which contains a greater assemblage of sublime ideas, of bold and daring figures, than is, perhaps, any where else to be met with. In it every object is animated; a variety of personages is introduced: we hear the Jews, the fir-trees, and the cedars of Lebanon, the ghosts of departed kings, the king of Babylon himself, and those who look upon his body, all speaking in their order, and acting their different parts without confusion.

To what are both figures subject; and why? Whose poems abound with the most beautiful instances of this figure; and what example is given? For these bold figures what was particularly fitted; and hence what follows? What instance is given; and of the passage in the fourteenth chapter of Isaiah, what is remarked?

ANALYSIS.

1. Hyperbole.

A. The different kinds of hyperboles.

- a. Those suggested by passion.
- b. Those employed in description.

2. Personification.

A. The different degrees of this figure.

a. The first degree.

b. The second degree.

c. The third degree.

B. Rules for the management of personification.

3. Apostrophe.

A. Examples.

LECTURE XVII.

COMPARISON, ANTITHESIS, INTERROGATION, EXCLAMATION, AND OTHER FIGURES OF SPEECH.

COMPARISON or simile, is a figure frequently employed, both in poetry and prose. In a former lecture, the difference betwixt it and metaphor was fully explained. A metaphor is a comparison implied, but not expressed as such; as when we say, 'Achilles is a lion,' meaning that he resembles one in courage or strength. A comparison is when the resemblance between two objects is expressed in form, and generally pursued more fully than the nature of a metaphor admits; as when we say, 'The actions of princes are like those great rivers, the course of which every one beholds, but their springs have been seen by few.' This short instance will show, that a happy comparison is a kind of sparkling ornament, which adds lustre and beauty to writing.

All comparisons may be comprehended under two heads—*explaining* and *embellishing* comparisons. For when a writer likens the object of which he treats to any other thing, it always is, or always should be with a view, either to make us understand that object more distinctly, or to render it more pleasing. All manner of subjects, even the most abstract reasoning, admits of explaining comparisons. For instance, the distinction between the powers of sense and imagination in the human mind, are, in Mr. Harris's *Hermes*, illustrated by a simile, in the following manner: 'As wax,' says he, 'would not be adequate to the purpose of signature, if it had not the power to retain as well as to receive the impression, the same holds of the soul, with respect to sense and imagination. Sense is its receptive power; imagination its retentive. Had it sense without

Where is comparison or simile frequently employed? What is the difference between it and metaphor; and what are illustrative examples of each? What will this short instance show? Under what two heads may all comparisons be comprehended; and why? How extensively may comparisons be applied; and what example of illustration is given from Mr. Harris's *Hermes*?

imagination, it would not be as wax, but as water ; where-though all impressions be instantly made, yet as soon as they are made, they are instantly lost.' In comparisons of this kind, the understanding is much more concerned than the fancy ; and, therefore, the only rules to be observed with respect to them, are, that they be clear and useful—that they tend to render our conception of the principal object more distinct—and that they do not lead our view aside, and bewilder it with any false light.

But embellishing comparisons, introduced not so much with a view to inform and instruct, as to adorn the subject of which we treat, are those with which we are chiefly concerned at present ; and those, indeed, which most frequently occur. Resemblance, as was before observed, is the foundation of this figure. We must not, however, take resemblance in too strict a sense, for actual similitude or likeness of appearance. Two objects may raise a train of similar or concordant ideas in the mind, though they resemble each other, strictly speaking, in nothing. For example, to describe the nature of soft and melancholy music, Ossian says, 'The music of Carryl was like the memory of joys that are past, pleasant and mournful to the soul.' This is happy and delicate ; yet no kind of music bears any resemblance to a feeling of the mind, such as the memory of past joys. Had it been compared to the voice of the nightingale, or the murmur of the stream, as it would have been by an ordinary poet, the likeness would have been more strict ; but, by founding his simile upon the effect which Carryl's music produced, the poet, while he conveys a very tender image, gives us, at the same time, a much stronger impression of the nature and strain of that music.

The rules to be given concerning comparisons, respect chiefly two articles—the propriety of their introduction, and the nature of the objects whence they are to be taken. In the first place, from what has already been said, it is mani-

In comparisons of this kind, which is most concerned, the understanding or the fancy ; and, therefore, what are the only rules to be observed with respect to them ? But with what comparisons are we now chiefly concerned ; and what is observed of them ? What is the foundation of this figure ; yet why must it not be taken in too strict a sense for actual similitude ? How is this illustrated from Ossian ; and of this passage what is observed ? By what comparison would the likeness have been more strict ; but what follows ? What two articles do the rules given concerning comparisons, respect ? In the first place, from what has already been said what is manifest ; and why ?

fest that they are not the language of strong passion ; but of an imagination, sprightly, indeed, and warmed, though undisturbed by any violent or agitating emotion. Strong passion is too severe to admit this play of fancy. It has no time to seek for resembling objects ; it dwells upon that object which has seized and taken possession of the soul. An author, therefore, can scarcely commit a greater fault, than in the midst of passion to introduce a simile. Our writers of tragedies often err in this respect. Thus Mr. Addison, in his *Cato*, makes Portius, just after Lucia had bid him farewell for ever, and when he should naturally have been represented in the most violent anguish, express himself in a studied and affected comparison.

Thus o'er the dying lamp th' unsteady flame
Hangs quiv'ring on a point, leaps off by fits,
And falls again, as loth to quit its hold.
Thou must not go ; my soul still hovers o'er thee,
And can't get loose.

Every one must be sensible, that this is quite remote from the language of nature on such occasions.

Though comparison be not the language of strong passion, so neither, when designed as an embellishment, is it the language of a mind totally unmoved. Being a figure of dignity, it always requires some elevation in the subject to make it proper. It supposes the imagination to be uncommonly enlivened, though the heart be not agitated by passion. The language of simile seems to lie between the highly pathetic and the very humble style, at an equal distance from each. It is, however, a sparkling ornament ; and must, consequently, dazzle and fatigue, if it recur too often. Similes should, even in poetry, be employed with moderation ; but in prose, much more ; otherwise the style will become disagreeably florid, and the ornament lose its beauty and effect.

We shall next proceed to the rules that relate to objects whence comparisons should be drawn ; supposing them introduced in their proper place.

What, therefore, is one of the greatest faults an author can commit ; who often err in this respect, and what illustration is given ? In this passage, of what must every one be sensible ? Though comparison be not the style of strong passion, so what follows ? Being a figure of dignity, what does it always require ; and what does it suppose ? Where does the language of simile seem to lie ; but of it what remark follows ? Of the employment of similes in poetry, and in prose, what is remarked ; and why ? To what do we next proceed ?

In the first place, they must not be drawn from things which have too intimate and obvious a resemblance to the object with which they are compared. The pleasure which we receive from the act of comparing, arises from the discovery of likenesses among things of different species, where we should not, at first sight, expect a resemblance. Thus, when Milton compares Satan's appearance after his fall, to that of the sun suffering an eclipse, and frightening the nations with portentous darkness, we are struck with the happiness and the dignity of the similitude. But when he compares Eve's bower in Paradise, to the arbor of Pomona, we receive little entertainment; as every one sees that one arbor must, of course, in several respects, resemble another.

But in the second place, as comparisons ought not to be founded on likenesses too obvious, much less ought they to be founded on those which are too faint and distant. These, instead of assisting, strain the fancy to comprehend them, and throw no light upon the subject. It is also to be observed, that a comparison, which, in the principal circumstances, carries a sufficiently near resemblance, may become unnatural and obscure, if extended too far. Nothing is more opposite to the design of this figure, than to seek after a great number of coincidences in minute points, merely to show how far the poet's wit can stretch the resemblance.

In the third place, the object from which a comparison is drawn, should never be an unknown object, or one of which few people can form clear ideas. Similes, therefore, founded on philosophical discoveries, or on any thing with which persons of a particular trade only, or a particular profession, are acquainted, produce not their proper effect. They should be drawn from those illustrious and noted objects, which the generality of readers have either seen, or can strongly conceive. This leads us to observe that, though lions, and wolves, and serpents, were fruitful, and very proper sources of similes among the ancients, yet, in adopt-

What is the first rule given? Whence does the pleasure which we receive from the act of comparing arise; and from Milton, how is this remark illustrated? In the second place, on what should not comparisons be founded; and why? What is also to be observed; and what is altogether opposed to the design of this figure? In the third place, what is observed of the object from which a comparison is to be drawn; and what similes, therefore, produce not the proper effect? From what objects should they be drawn and what does this lead us to observe?

ing them, the moderns are very injudicious; as the propriety of them is now, in a great measure, lost. With many of them we are acquainted only at second hand, and by description; and to most readers of poetry, it were better to describe lions or serpents, by similes taken from men, than to describe men by lions.

In the fourth place, we must observe, that in compositions of a grave or elevated kind, similes should never be taken from low or mean objects. These have a tendency to degrade and vilify: whereas similes are generally intended to dignify and embellish; and, therefore, unless in burlesque writings, or where an object is meant to be diminished, mean ideas should never be submitted to our observation. We must remember, however, that many similes drawn from the incidents of rural life, which appear low to us, had abundance of dignity in the simpler ages of antiquity.

Having considered metaphor, hyperbole, personification, apostrophe, and comparison, we now pass to antithesis.

Antithesis is founded on the contrast or opposition of two objects. By contrast, objects opposed to each other always appear in a stronger light. Beauty, for instance, never appears so charming as when contrasted with ugliness and deformity. Antithesis, therefore, may, on many occasions, be employed advantageously, to strengthen the impression which we propose that any object should make. Thus Cicero, in his defence of Milo, representing the improbability of Milo's attempting to take away the life of Clodius, when every thing was unfavorable to such a design, after he had omitted many opportunities of effecting such a purpose, heightens our conviction of this improbability, by a judicious use of this figure: 'Is it credible that, when he declined putting Clodius to death with the consent of all, he would choose to do it with the disapprobation of many? Can you believe that the person whom he scrupled to slay, when he might have done so with full justice, in a convenient place, at a proper time, with secure impunity, he made no scruple to murder against justice, in an unfavorable place, at an un-

In the fourth place, of similes in compositions of an elevated kind, what is remarked? What tendency have these; and, therefore, what follows? What must we, however, remember? From comparison, to what figure do we pass; and on what is it founded? By contrast what effect is produced; and what illustration follows? Antithesis, therefore, may be advantageously employed for what purpose; and how is this fully illustrated from Cicero's defence of Milo?

seasonable time, and at the risk of capital condemnation?" Here the antithesis is rendered complete, by the words and members of the sentence, expressing the contrasted objects, being similarly constructed, and made to correspond to each other.

At the same time, it must be observed, that the frequent use of antithesis, especially where the opposition in the words is nice and quaint, is apt to render style unpleasing. A maxim, or moral saying, very properly receives this form; both, because it is supposed to be the effect of meditation, and is designed to be engraven on the memory, which recalls it more easily, by the aid of such contrasted expressions. But where a number of such sentences succeed each other; when this becomes an author's favorite and prevailing mode of expression, his style is faulty and exposed to censure.

Interrogations and exclamations, to which we now proceed, are passionate figures. They are, indeed, on so many occasions, the native language of passion, that their use is extremely frequent; and in ordinary conversation, when we are heated, they prevail as much as in the most sublime oratory. The literal use of interrogation, is to ask a question; but when men are prompted by passion, whatever they would affirm or deny with great earnestness, they naturally put in the form of a question; expressing thereby the firmest confidence of the truth of their own opinion; and appealing to their hearers for the impossibility of the contrary. Thus, in scripture: "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent. Hath he said it, and shall he not do it? Hath he spoken it, and shall he not make it good?"

Interrogation may often be applied with propriety, when the emotions are no higher than those which naturally arise from close reasoning; but exclamations belong to stronger emotions of the mind only—to surprise, anger, joy, grief, and the like. These being natural signs of a moved and

Here, in what manner is the antithesis rendered complete? At the same time, of the frequent use of this figure, what is remarked? Why does a maxim, or moral saying, very properly receive this form; but when does an author's style become faulty? Of interrogations and exclamations what is observed? What is the literal use of interrogation; but when prompted by passion how is it used; and thereby doing what? What example of this is given from scripture? When, also, may interrogations often be applied with propriety; but to what do exclamations belong? Of these, in their proper application, what is observed; but what has a very bad effect?

agitated mind, always, when they are properly employed, make us sympathize with those who use them, and enter into their feelings. Nothing, however, has a worse effect than the frequent and unseasonable use of exclamations. Young, inexperienced writers suppose, that by pouring them forth plentifully, they render their compositions warm and animated. But quite the contrary is the case: they render them frigid to excess. When an author is always calling upon us to enter into transports which he has said nothing to inspire, he excites our disgust and indignation. He raises no sympathy; for he gives us no passion of his own, in which we can take part.

Another figure of speech, fit for animated compositions only, is what some critical writers call vision; when, instead of relating something that is past, we use the present tense, and describe it as if passing immediately before our eyes. Thus Cicero, in his fourth oration against Cataline: 'I seem to myself to behold this city, the ornament of the earth, and the capital of all nations, suddenly involved in one conflagration. I see before me the slaughtered heaps of citizens lying unburied in the midst of their ruined country. The ferocious countenance of Cethegus rises to my view, while with a savage joy he is triumphing in your miseries.' This manner of description, supposes a sort of enthusiasm which carries the person who describes it, in some measure, out of himself; and, when well executed, it has great beauty. But to execute it with success requires an unusually warm imagination, and so happy a selection of circumstances, as shall make us think we see, before our eyes, the scene that is described. Otherwise it shares the same fate with all feeble attempts towards passionate figures—that of throwing ridicule upon the author, and leaving the reader more cool and uninterested than he was before.

The last figure which we shall mention, and which is of frequent use, especially at the bar, is called climax. It consists in an artful exaggeration of all the circumstances of some object or action which we wish to place in a strong light. It operates by a gradual rise of one circumstance

What do young, inexperienced writers suppose; but, on the contrary, when does an author excite our disgust; and why does he raise no sympathy? What is vision; and what example of it is given from Cicero? What does this manner of description suppose; but what does to execute it with success, require? If this be not the case, what fate will it share? In what does climax consist; and how does it operate?

above another, till our idea be raised to the highest pitch. A common example of this figure is that noted passage in Cicero, which every school-boy knows: 'It is a crime to put a Roman citizen in bonds; it is the height of guilt to scourge him; little less than parricide to put him to death. What name then shall I give to crucifying him?' Another famous instance is from a pleading of a celebrated Scotch lawyer, Sir George M'Kenzie. It is in a charge to a jury, in the case of a woman who was accused of murdering her own child. 'Gentlemen, if one man had any how slain another; if an adversary had killed his opposer, or a woman occasioned the death of her enemy; even these criminals would have been capitally punished by the Cornelian law: but, if this guiltless infant, who could make no enemy, had been murdered by its own nurse, what punishments would not then the mother have demanded? With what cries and exclamations would she have stunned your ears? What shall we say then, when a woman, guilty of homicide, a mother, of the murder of her innocent child, hath comprised all these misdeeds, in one single crime—a crime, in its own nature, detestable; in a woman, prodigious; in a mother, incredible; and perpetrated against one whose age called for compassion, whose near relation claimed affection, and whose innocence deserved the highest favor?' Such regular climaxes, however, though they have great beauty, at the same time have the appearance of art and study; and consequently, though they may be admitted into formal harangues, yet, they are not the language of passion, which seldom proceeds by such regular and measured steps.

What passage from Cicero affords a common example of this figure? What other famous instance is given; and what is it? Of such regular climaxes, however, what is remarked; and what consequence follows?

ANALYSIS.

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| 1. Comparison. | c. Comparisons not to be drawn from unknown objects. |
| A. Explaining comparisons. | |
| B. Embellishing comparisons | d. Not to be taken from low or mean objects. |
| C. Rules concerning comparisons. | |
| a. The resemblance not to be obvious. | 2. Antithesis. |
| b. The likeness not to be too remote. | 3. Interrogation—exclamation. |
| | 4. Vision. |
| | 5. Climax. |

LECTURE XVIII.

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE—GENERAL CHARACTERS OF STYLE—DIFFUSE, CONCISE, FEEBLE, NERVOUS, DRY, PLAIN, NEAT, ELEGANT, FLOWERY.

HAVING treated at considerable length of the figures of speech, some general observations seem incumbent, concerning the appropriate use of them.

In the first place, not all the beauties, nor even the chief beauties of composition, depend upon tropes and figures. Some of the sublimest and most pathetic passages of the most admired authors, both in prose and poetry, are expressed in the simplest style, without the smallest use of figures; instances of which have already been given. On the other hand, a composition may abound with these studied ornaments; the language may be artful, splendid, and highly figured, and yet the composition be frigid and unaffecting: for, if the style be stiff and affected, if it be deficient in ease and neatness, all the figures that can be employed will never render it agreeable.

In the second place, figures, in order to be beautiful, must rise naturally from the subject. As all of them are the language either of imagination, or of passion, they are beautiful, only when they are prompted by one or the other of these powers. They must flow from a mind warmed by the object which it seeks to describe; and the course of thought should never be interrupted to seek for them. Many think that the ornaments of style are detached from the subject, and can be stuck to it like lace upon a coat. And it is this false idea that has often brought attention to the beauties of writing into disrepute; whereas, the real and proper orna-

Having treated at considerable length of the figures of speech, what seems incumbent? What is the first; and what remark follows? On the other hand, what may a composition possess, and still be unaffecting; and why? What is remarked in the second place; and for what reasons? From a mind in what state must they flow; and what follows? Of the ornaments of style, many are of what opinion; and what has been the effect of this false idea? But of the real and proper ornaments of style, what is remarked; and of a writer of genius what is observed?

ments of style arise from sentiment. They flow in the same stream with the current of thought. A writer of genius conceives his subject strongly; his imagination is filled and impressed with it; and pours itself forth in that figurative language which imagination naturally speaks. He assumes no emotion which his subject does not excite; he speaks as he feels; but his style will be beautiful, because his feelings are lively.

In the third place, even when imagination prompts them, figures must not be employed too frequently. Nothing derogates more from the weight and dignity of any composition, than too great attention to ornament. When the ornaments cost labor, that labor always appears; though they should cost us none, still the reader or hearer may be surfeited with them; and when they come too thick, they give the impression of a light and frothy genius, that evaporates in show, rather than brings forth what is solid. The directions of the ancient critics on this head, are full of good sense, and deserve careful attention. Cicero says, 'In all human things, disgust borders so closely on the most lively pleasures, that we need not be surprised to find this hold in eloquence. From reading either poets or orators we may easily satisfy ourselves, that neither a poem nor an oration, which, without intermission, is showy and sparkling, can please us long. Wherefore, though we may wish for the frequent praise of having expressed ourselves well and properly, we should not covet frequent applause, for being bright and splendid.'

In the fourth place, without a genius for figurative language, none should attempt it. Imagination is a power not to be acquired; it must be derived from nature. Its redundancies we may prune, its deviations we may correct, its sphere we may enlarge; but the faculty itself we cannot create. All efforts towards an ornamental style, if we have not the proper genius for it, will prove awkward and disgusting. But without this talent, or with a very small measure of it, we may both write and speak to advantage.

In the third place, even when imagination prompts them, why should not figures be employed too frequently? What is remarked of the directions of the ancient critics on this head; and what says Cicero on this subject? What is the fourth direction for the use of figures; and of imagination what is remarked? Without what will all efforts towards an ornamental style, prove disgusting; but what remark follows?

Good sense, clear ideas, perspicuity of language, and proper arrangement, will always command attention; and are, indeed, the foundations of all solid merit, both in speaking and writing.

That different subjects require different sorts of style, is manifest. Every one knows that treatises of philosophy should not be composed in the same style with orations. It is equally apparent, that different parts of the same composition require a variation in the style and manner. Yet amidst this variety we still expect to find, in the composition of any one man, some degree of uniformity or consistency with himself in manner; we expect to find some prevailing character of style impressed on all his writings, which shall be suited to, and shall mark his particular genius and turn of mind. The orations of Livy differ considerably in style, as they should do, from the rest of his history. The same observation may be applied to those of Tacitus. Yet in the orations of both these elegant historians, the distinguishing manner of each may be clearly traced—the magnificent fullness of the one, and the sententious conciseness of the other. Wherever there is real and native genius, it prompts to one kind of style rather than to another. Where this is wanting—where there is no marked nor peculiar character in the compositions of an author, we are apt to infer, and not without reason, that he is a vulgar and trivial author, who writes from imitation, and not from the impulse of original genius.

One of the first and most obvious distinctions of the different kinds of style, arises from an author's spreading out his thoughts more or less. This distinction forms what is called the diffuse and the concise styles. A concise writer compresses his thoughts in the fewest possible words; he employs none but such as are most expressive; he lops off all those which are not a material addition to the sense. Whatever ornament he admits is adopted for the sake of force, rather than of grace. The same thought is never

What will always command attention; and of what are they the foundation? How does it appear that different subjects require different sorts of style; and what is equally apparent? Yet amidst this variety, what do we expect to find? How is this remark illustrated from the writings of Livy and of Tacitus? Whenever there is real genius, to what does it prompt; and where there is no peculiar character in the writings of an author, what are we apt to infer? From what does one of the first and most obvious distinctions of the different kinds of style arise; and what does this form?

repeated. The utmost precision is studied in his sentences ; and they are generally designed to suggest more to the reader's imagination than they immediately express.

A diffuse writer unfolds his thought fully. He places it in a variety of lights, and gives the reader every possible assistance for understanding it completely. He is not very anxious to express it at first in its full strength, because he intends to repeat the impression ; and what he wants in strength, he endeavors to supply by copiousness. His periods naturally flow into some length ; and having room for ornament of every kind, he admits it freely.

Each of these manners has its peculiar advantages ; and each becomes faulty when carried to the extreme. The extreme of conciseness becomes abrupt and obscure ; it is apt, also, to lead into a style too pointed, and bordering on the epigrammatic. The extreme of diffuseness becomes weak and languid, and tires the reader. Of conciseness carried as far as propriety will allow, perhaps in some cases farther, Tacitus the historian, and Montesquieu, in ' *L'Esprit de Loix*,' are remarkable examples. Aristotle, too, holds an eminent rank among didactic writers, for brevity. Of a beautiful and magnificent diffuseness, Cicero is, beyond doubt, the most illustrious instance that can be given. Addison, also, and Sir William Temple, come, in some degree, under this class.

To determine when to adopt the concise, and when the diffuse manner, we must be guided by the nature of the composition. Discourses that are to be spoken, require a more copious style than books that are to be read. In written compositions, a proper degree of conciseness has great advantages. It is more lively ; keeps up attention ; makes a stronger impression on the mind ; and gratifies the reader by supplying more exercise to his conception. Description, when we wish to have it vivid and animated, should be in a concise strain. Any redundant words or circumstances encumber the fancy, and render the object we present to it

Of a concise writer what is remarked ? What is observed of a diffuse writer ? What is farther observed of each of these methods ? What is remarked of the extreme of conciseness and also of the extreme of diffuseness ? Who are the best examples that can be mentioned of conciseness ; and who, also, of diffuseness ? How shall we determine when to adopt the concise, and when the diffuse manner ; and of discourses that are to be spoken what is remarked ? What are the advantages of conciseness in written compositions ? When should description be in a concise strain ; and why ?

confused and indistinct. The strength and vivacity of description, whether in prose or poetry, depend much more upon the happy choice of one or two important circumstances, than upon the multiplication of them. When we desire to strike the fancy, or to move the heart, we should be concise; when to inform the understanding, which is more deliberate in its motions, and wants the assistance of a guide, it is better to be full. Historical narration may be beautiful, either in a concise or diffuse manner, according to the author's genius. Livy and Herodotus are diffuse; Thucydides and Sallust are concise; yet they are all agreeable.

The nervous and the feeble, are generally considered as characters of style, of the same import with the concise and the diffuse. They do, indeed, very frequently coincide. Diffuse writers have, for the most part, some degree of feebleness; and nervous writers will generally be inclined to a concise expression. This, however, does not always hold; since there are instances of writers who, in the midst of a full and ample style, have maintained a considerable degree of strength. Livy is an example of the truth of this remark. The foundation, indeed, of a nervous or a weak style, is laid in an author's manner of thinking. If he conceives an object strongly, he will express it with energy; but if he has only an indistinct view of his subject—if his ideas be loose and wavering, this will clearly appear in his style. Unmeaning words and loose epithets will escape him: his expressions will be vague and general; his arrangement indistinct and weak; and our conception of his meaning will be faint and confused. But a nervous writer, be his style concise or extended, gives us always a strong idea of his meaning: his mind being full of his subject, his words are, consequently, all expressive; every phrase and every figure which he uses, renders the picture which he would set before us, more striking and complete.

It must, however, be observed, that too great a study of

On what does the strength and vivacity of description depend? When should we be concise, and when full? Of historical composition what is observed; and who are mentioned as examples? How are the nervous and feeble generally considered; and in what do they frequently coincide? There are, however, instances of writers of what description; and who is an example of the truth of this remark? Where is the foundation of a nervous or a weak style laid; and how is this remark fully illustrated? What must, however, be observed; and from what does harshness proceed?

strength, to the neglect of the other qualities of style, is apt to betray writers into a harsh manner. Harshness proceeds from uncommon words, from forced inversions in the constructions of a sentence, and too great a neglect of smoothness and ease. This is imputed as a fault to some of our earliest classics in the English language; such as Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Francis Bacon, Hooker, Harrington, Cudworth, Milton in his prose works, and some other writers of considerable reputation in the days of Queen Elizabeth, James I., and Charles I. These writers had nerves and strength in a high degree; and are, to this day, distinguished for that kind of style. But the language, in their hands, was very different from what it is at present, and was, indeed, entirely formed upon the idiom and construction of the Latin, in the arrangement of sentences. The present form which the language has assumed, has, in some degree, sacrificed the study of strength to that of ease and perspicuity. Our arrangement has become less forcible, perhaps, but more plain and natural: and this is now understood to be the genius of our language; the æra of the formation of which, seems to be the restoration of King Charles II.

Hitherto we have considered style under those characters that respect its expressiveness of an author's meaning. We shall now consider it in another view—with respect to the degree of ornament employed to embellish it. Here, the style of different authors seem to rise in the following gradation: a dry, a plain, a neat, an elegant, and a flowery manner. Of each of these we shall treat briefly, in the order in which they stand.

A dry manner excludes all ornament of every kind. Content with being understood, it aims not to please, in the least degree, either the fancy or the ear. This is tolerable in pure didactic writing only; and even there, to make us bear it, great solidity of matter is necessary, and entire perspicuity of language. Aristotle is a perfect example of

To whom is this imputed as a fault; but of these writers what is farther remarked? What was the language in their hands; and of the form which it has at present assumed, what is remarked? What is now understood to be the genius of our language; and what was the æra of its formation? Hitherto how have we considered style; and how shall we now consider it? Here, in what gradation does the style of different authors seem to rise? What is remarked of a dry manner; and where, only, is this tolerable? Who is a perfect example of a dry style; and what is observed of him?

a dry style. Never, perhaps, was there any author who adhered so rigidly to the strictness of a didactic manner, throughout all his writings, and conveyed so much instruction without the least approach to ornament. But this is not a manner to be imitated; as it fatigues attention, and conveys our sentiments to others with disadvantage.

A plain style rises one degree above a dry one. A writer of this character employs very little ornament of any kind, and rests almost entirely upon his sense. But, though he does not engage us by the arts of composition, he avoids disgusting us like a dry and a harsh writer. Besides perspicuity, he observes propriety, purity, and precision, in his language; which form no inconsiderable degree of beauty. Liveliness and force are, also, consistent with a plain style; and, therefore, such an author, if his sentiments be good, may be sufficiently agreeable. The difference between a dry and a plain writer, is, that the former is incapable of ornament, and seems not to know what it is; the latter does not seek after it. He gives us his meaning in language distinct and pure; but about any farther ornament, he gives himself no trouble; either, because he thinks it unnecessary, or because his genius does not lead him to delight in it. Of writers that have employed the plain style, Dean Swift and Mr. Locke, are, perhaps, the most eminent examples.

What is called a neat style comes next in order: and here we are advanced into the region of ornament; but that ornament is not of the most sparkling kind. A writer of this character, shows that he does not despise the beauty of language, by his attention to the choice of his words, and to their graceful collocation. His sentences are always free from the incumbrance of superfluous words; are of a moderate length; rather inclining to brevity than to a swelling structure; and closing with propriety. His cadence is varied; but not of the studied musical kind. His figures, if he uses any, are short and correct, rather than bold and glowing. Such a style may, by industry and attention, be

Why is not this manner to be imitated? Of a writer in plain style, what is remarked? Besides perspicuity, what does he observe; and what do they form? What are also consistent with a plain style; and, therefore, what follows? What is the difference between a dry and a plain writer; and of the latter kind, who are the most eminent examples? Of a neat style what is remarked; and what is observed of a writer of this character? What is said of his sentences, his cadence, and his figures? By whom may such a style be attained; and to what is it applicable?

attained by a writer whose powers of fancy and genius are not extensive; and it is not unsuitable to any subject whatever.

An elegant style admits a higher degree of ornament than a neat one; and possesses all the virtues of ornament, without any of its excesses or defects. Complete elegance implies great perspicuity and propriety; purity in the choice of words, and care and dexterity in their harmonious and happy arrangement. It implies farther, the grace and beauty of imagination spread over style, as far as the subject admits it; and all the illustrations which figurative language affords, when properly employed. An elegant writer, in short, is one who pleases the fancy and the ear, while he informs the understanding; and who clothes his ideas with all the beauty of expression, but does not overload them with any of its misplaced finery. In this class, therefore, but few writers in our language are placed; such as Addison, Dryden, and Pope; and a few others of the same order.

A florid style is one in which ornament abounds to excess. This, in a young composer, is not only pardonable, but often indicates a bold and inventive genius. But, although it may be allowed to youth, in their first attempts, it must not receive the same indulgence from writers of more experience. In them, judgment should chasten imagination, and reject every ornament which is unsuitable or redundant. This tinsel splendor of language, which some writers perpetually affect, is truly contemptible. With these, it is a luxuriance of words, not of fancy. They forget that unless it be founded on solid thought, the most florid style is but a childish imposition upon ignorant and unthinking readers.

What does an elegant style admit; and what does it possess? What does complete elegance imply; and what does it still farther imply? What, in short, is an elegant writer; and in this class who are placed? What is a florid style; and what is observed of it in youth? But in whom must it not receive the same indulgence; and why? Of this tinsel splendor of language, and of the writers who use it, what is farther remarked?

ANALYSIS.

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The appropriate use of figures. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. The first direction. B. The second direction. C. The third direction. D. The fourth direction. 2. Style, with respect to its expression. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. The diffuse and the concise style. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> B. The nervous and the feeble style. 3. Style, with respect to ornament. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. A dry style. B. A plain style. C. A neat style. D. An elegant style. E. A florid style. |
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LECTURE XIX.

GENERAL CHARACTERS OF STYLE—SIMPLE, AFFECTED, VEHEMENT—DIRECTIONS FOR FORMING A PROPER STYLE.

WE next proceed to treat of style under another character ; which is one of great importance in writing, and which requires to be accurately examined—that of simplicity as distinguished from affectation. Simplicity, applied to writing, is a term very commonly used ; but, like many other critical terms, often used vaguely and without precision. The different meanings given to the word simplicity, has been the chief cause of this inaccuracy. It will not, therefore, be improper to make a distinction between them, and show in what sense simplicity is a proper attribute of style. There are four different acceptations in which this term is taken.

The first is simplicity of composition, as opposed to too great a variety of parts. Horace's precept refers to this :

Denique sit quod vis simplex duntaxat et unum.

Then learn the wandering humor to control,
And keep one equal tenor through the whole.

Francis.

This is the simplicity of plan in a tragedy, as distinguished from double plots, and crowded incidents—the simplicity of the *Iliad* or the *Æneid*, in opposition to the digressions of *Lucan* ; the simplicity of Grecian architecture, in opposition to the irregular variety of the Gothic. Simplicity, in this sense, is the same as unity.

The second sense is simplicity of thought, in opposition to refinement. Simple thoughts are those which flow naturally—which are easily suggested by the subject or occasion ; and which, when once suggested, are universally

Under what character do we next proceed to treat of style ; and what is said of it ? Of simplicity, when applied to writing, what is remarked ; and what has been the chief cause of this inaccuracy ? What, therefore, will not be improper ; and in how many different acceptations is the term taken ? What is the first ; and in reference to this what is the precept of Horace ? What examples of simplicity of this kind are mentioned ; and in this sense simplicity is the same as what ? What is the second sense ; and what are simple thoughts ?

understood. Refinement in writing, expresses a less obvious and natural train of thought, and which it required a peculiar turn of genius to pursue—within certain bounds very beautiful; but when carried too far, approaching to intricacy, and is displeasing, from the appearance of being far sought. Thus, we should naturally say, that Mr. Parnell is a poet of far greater simplicity, in his turn of thought, than Mr. Cowley; Cicero's thoughts on moral subjects are natural; Seneca's too refined and labored. In these two senses of simplicity, it has no relation to style.

A third sense of simplicity, is that in which it regards style; and is opposed to too much ornament or pomp of language. Thus we say, Mr. Locke is a simple, and Mr. Herve a florid writer. The simplest style, in this sense, coincides with the plain or neat style, and, therefore, requires no farther illustration.

There is a fourth sense of simplicity, which also respects style; but it regards not so much the degree of ornament employed, as the easy and natural manner in which our language expresses our thoughts. In this sense simplicity is compatible with the highest ornament. Homer, for example, possesses this simplicity in the greatest perfection; and yet no writer has more ornament and beauty. This simplicity, which is what we are now to consider, stands opposed, not to ornament, but to affectation of ornament, or appearance of labor about our style; and is a distinguished excellency in writing.

A writer of simplicity expresses himself in such a manner, that every one thinks he could have written in the same way; Horace describes it,

— ut sibi quivis
Speret idem, sudet multum, frustra que laboret
Ausus idem.
From well-known tales such fictions would I raise,
As all-might hope to imitate with ease;
Yet while they strive the same success to gain,
Should find their labors and their hopes in vain.

Francis.

What does refinement in writing express; and what is observed of it? To illustrate this remark, what examples are given? What is the third sense of simplicity; and how is this illustrated? With what does the simple style in this sense correspond; and, therefore, what follows? What is the fourth sense of simplicity; and in this sense with what is it compatible? Who is an example of this simplicity; and what is observed of him? To what does this simplicity stand opposed; and how is it regarded? How does a writer of simplicity express himself; and how does Horace describe it?

There are no marks of art in his expression : it seems the very language of nature : we see not the style, not the writer and his labor, but the man in his own natural character. He may be rich in his expression ; he may be full of figures and of fancy ; but these flow from him without effort ; and he appears to write in this manner, not because he has studied it, but because it is the manner of expression most natural to him. With this character of style, a certain degree of negligence is not inconsistent ; it is even not ungraceful ; for too accurate an attention to words is foreign to it. The great advantage of simplicity of style is, that like simplicity of manners, it shows us a man's sentiments and turn of mind, laid open without disguise. More studied and artificial manners of writing, however beautiful, have always this disadvantage—that they exhibit an author in form, like a man at court, where the splendor of dress, and the ceremonial of behavior, conceal those peculiarities which distinguish one man from another. But reading an author of simplicity, is like conversing with a person of rank at home, and with ease, where we see his natural manners, and his real character.

With respect to simplicity in general, we may remark, that the ancient original writers are always the most eminent for it. This proceeds from a very obvious cause—that they wrote from the dictates of natural genius, and were not formed upon the labors and writings of others, which will always, without great care, produce affectation. Hence, among the Greek writers, we have more models of a beautiful simplicity than among the Romans. Homer, Hesiod, Anacreon, Theocritus, Herodotus, and Xenophon, are all distinguished for it. Among the Romans also, we have some writers of this character ; particularly Terence, Lucretius, and Julius Cæsar.

Of the highest degree of simplicity in style, Mr. Addison is, beyond doubt, the most perfect example in the English language. In perspicuity and purity, he stands unequalled ;

Of a writer of this description what is farther observed ? With this manner of writing what is not inconsistent ; and why ? What is the great advantage of simplicity of style ; and what disadvantage have more studied and artificial manners of writing ? But reading an author of simplicity is like what ? With respect to simplicity in general, what may we remark ; and from what does this proceed ? Hence, among the Greek and Roman writers, what follows ? As it respects the highest degree of simplicity in style, what is observed of Mr. Addison ?

and his precision, though not great, is as great as his subjects generally require. The construction of his sentences is easy, agreeable, and commonly very musical. In figurative language he is rich; particularly in metaphors; which are so employed as to render his style splendid, without being gaudy. There is not the least affectation in his manner: we see no mark of labor; nothing forced or constrained; but great elegance joined with great ease and simplicity. He is particularly distinguished by a character of modesty and politeness, which appears in all his writings. No writer has a more popular and insinuating manner; and the great regard which he every where shows for virtue and religion, recommends him highly. If he fails in any thing, it is, that he wants strength; which renders his manner, though perfectly suited to the essays in the *Spectator*, not altogether a proper model for any of the higher kinds of composition.

Of affectation in style, which is opposed to simplicity, we have a remarkable instance in our language. Lord Shaftesbury, though an author of considerable merit, can express nothing with simplicity. He seems to have considered it vulgar, and beneath the dignity of a man of fashion, to speak like other men. Hence, he is perpetually in buskins; replete with circumlocutions and artificial elegance. In every sentence the marks of labor are visible; no appearance of that ease which expresses a sentiment coming natural and warm from the heart. He abounds with figures and ornaments of every kind; is sometimes happy in them; but his fondness for them is too conspicuous; and having once seized some metaphor or allusion that pleased him, he knows not how to part with it. He possessed delicacy and refinement of taste, to a degree that may be called excessive and sickly; but he had little warmth of passion; and the coldness of his character suggested that artificial and stately manner which appears in his writings. No author is more dangerous to the tribe of imitators than Shaftesbury, who,

Of the construction of his sentences, and of his metaphors, particularly, what is remarked? What remarks follow? For what is he particularly distinguished; and what recommend him highly? If he fails in any thing, in what is it; and what is its effect? Of affectation in style, who is the most remarkable instance in our language; and what is remarked of him? In every sentence what are visible; and without any appearance of what? With what does he abound; and what is observed of them? What did he possess; and to what degree? Why is he dangerous to the tribe of imitators?

amidst very considerable blemishes, has, at the same time, many dazzling and imposing beauties.

It is very possible, however, for an author to write with simplicity, and yet to be destitute of beauty. He may be free from affectation, and not have merit. The beautiful simplicity supposes an author to possess real genius; and capable of writing with solidity, purity, and liveliness of imagination. In this case the simplicity or unaffectedness of his manner is the crowning ornament: it heightens every other beauty; it is the dress of nature, without which all beauties are imperfect. But if the mere absence of affectation were sufficient to constitute the beauty of style, weak and dull writers might often have pretensions to it. And accordingly we frequently meet with pretended critics, who extol the dullest writers on account of what they call the 'chaste simplicity of their manner;' which, in fact, is nothing but the absence of all ornament, through the mere want of genius and imagination. A distinction, therefore, must be made between the simplicity which accompanies true genius, and which is perfectly compatible with every proper ornament of style, and that which is no other than a careless and slovenly manner.

Another character of style, different from those which have already been mentioned, is the vehement. This always implies strength; and is not, in any respect, inconsistent with simplicity. It is distinguished by a peculiar ardor; it is the language of a man whose imagination and passions are heated, and strongly affected by what he writes; who is, therefore, negligent of lesser graces, but pours himself forth with the rapidity and fullness of a torrent. It belongs to the higher kinds of oratory; and, indeed, is rather expected from a man who is speaking, than from one who is writing in his closet. The orations of Demosthenes furnish the fullest and most perfect example of this species of style.

Having ascertained and explained the different characters

How does it appear that an author may write with simplicity, and yet be destitute of beauty; and what does the beautiful simplicity suppose? In this case what is the crowning ornament; and why? But if the mere absence of affectation were sufficient to constitute the beauty of style, what would follow? Accordingly, with what do we frequently meet; and what is observed of it? Between what, therefore, must a distinction be made? Of the vehement style what is remarked; and with what is it not inconsistent? What is farther observed of it; and to what does it belong? Whose orations furnish an example of this species of style? Having explained the different characters of style, with what shall we conclude?

of style, we shall conclude our observations with a few directions for the attainment of excellence in writing.

The first direction proper to be observed, is, to study clear ideas on the subject concerning which we are to write or to speak. This direction may appear, at first, to have little relation to style; but its relation to it is extremely close. The style and thoughts of a writer are so intimately connected, that, as has already been frequently hinted, it is often difficult to distinguish them. Wherever the impression of things upon our minds are faint and indistinct, or perplexed and confused, our style, in treating of such things, will infallibly be so too. But, what we conceive clearly and feel strongly, we shall naturally express with clearness and with strength. We should, therefore, think closely on the subject, till we shall have attained a full and distinct view of the matter which we are to clothe in words—till we become warm and interested in it; then, and not till then, shall we find expression begin to flow.

In the second place, to the acquisition of a good style, frequency of composing is indispensably necessary. Many rules respecting style have been delivered, but no rules will answer the end without exercise and habit. At the same time, it is not every sort of composing that will improve style. This is so far from being the case, that by frequent, careless, and hasty composition, we shall acquire a very bad style; and shall have more trouble afterwards in unlearning faults, and correcting negligences, than if we had not been accustomed to compose at all. In the beginning, therefore, we ought to write with great deliberation and care. Facility and rapidity are the fruit of practice and experience. We must be cautious, however, not to retard the course of thought, nor cool the ardor of imagination, by pausing too long on every word we employ. There is, on certain occasions, a glow of composition which should be kept up, if we hope to express ourselves happily, though at the expense of some inaccuracies. A more severe examination must be the work of correction. What we have written should be laid aside for some time, till the ardor of compo-

What is the first; and what is remarked of it? How is this remark illustrated? What should we, therefore, do; and why? In the second place, to the acquisition of a good style, what is requisite; but at the same time, why will not every kind of composition improve it? In the beginning, therefore, how should we write; but of what must we be cautious; and why? How should we correct what we may have written?

sition be past ; till the partiality for our expressions be weakened, and the expressions themselves be forgotten ; and then, examining our work with a cool and critical eye, as if it were the performance of another, we shall discover many imperfections, which at first escaped our notice.

In the third place, an acquaintance with the style of the best authors is peculiarly requisite. Hence a just taste will be formed, and a copious fund of words be supplied, on every subject. No exercise, perhaps, will be found more useful for acquiring a proper style, than to translate some passage from an elegant author, into our own words. Thus to take, for instance, a page of one of Mr. Addison's papers in the *Spectator*, and read it carefully two or three times over, till we are in full possession of the thoughts it contains ; then to lay aside the book ; to attempt to write out the passage from memory, as well as we can ; and having done so, open the book, and compare what we have written with the style of the author. Such an exercise will, by comparison, show us where our defects lie ; will teach us how to correct them ; and, from the variety of expression which it will exhibit, will conduct us to that which is most beautiful and perfect.

In the fourth place, a caution must be given against a servile imitation of any one author whatever. Imitation hampers genius, and generally produces stiffness of expression. They who follow an author minutely, commonly copy his faults as well as his beauties. No one will ever be an accomplished writer or speaker, who has not some confidence in his own genius. We ought carefully to avoid using any author's particular phrases, or transcribing passages from him : such a habit will prove fatal to all genuine composition. It is much better to possess something of our own, though of inferior beauty, than to endeavor to shine in borrowed ornaments, which will, at last, betray the utter barrenness of our genius.

In the fifth place, it is an obvious, but material rule, with respect to style, that we always study to adapt it to the subject, and also to the capacity of our hearers, if we are to

What is the third direction ? What exercise is recommended ; and what illustration is given ? What will be the effect of such an exercise ? What is the fourth direction ; and why is it given ? Without what will no one ever be an accomplished writer or speaker ; what ought we, therefore, carefully to avoid ; and why ? What remark follows ? In the fifth place, what is an obvious rule with respect to style ; and what is awkward and absurd ?

speak in public. To attempt a poetical style, when it should be our business to argue and reason only, is, in the highest degree, awkward and absurd. To speak with elaborate pomp of words, before those who cannot comprehend them, is equally ridiculous and useless. When we begin to write or speak, we should previously impress on our minds a complete idea of the end to be aimed at; keep this steadily in view, and adapt our style to it.

We must, in the last place, remember, that attention to style must not engross us so much, as to prevent a higher degree of attention to the thoughts. This rule is the more necessary, since the present taste of the age seems to be directed more to style than to thought. It is much more easy to dress up trifling and common thoughts with some ornament of expression, than to afford a fund of vigorous, ingenious, and useful sentiments. The latter requires genius; the former may be attained by industry, with the aid of very superficial parts. Hence the crowd of writers who are rich in words, but poor in sentiments. The public ear is now so much accustomed to a correct and ornamented style, that no writer can, with safety, neglect the study of it. But he is a contemptible one, who looks not beyond the dress of language; who lays not the chief stress upon his matter; and who does not regard ornament as a secondary and inferior recommendation.

What is equally ridiculous and useless; and what remark follows? What must we, in the last place, remember; and why is this rule the more necessary? What remark follows; and why is this the case? What is the present state of the public ear; and who, consequently, is a contemptible writer?

ANALYSIS.

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Simplicity of style. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Simplicity of composition. B. Simplicity in opposition to refinement. C. Simplicity in opposition to ornament. D. Simplicity of expression. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Illustrated. E. Affectation in style. 2. The vehement style. 3. Directions for attaining a good style. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Clear ideas to be studied. B. Frequency of composition. C. Familiarity with the best authors. D. Servile imitation to be avoided. E. Style to be adapted to the subject. F. Thoughts to be attended to rather than style. |
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LECTURE XX.

CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF MR. ADDISON'S STYLE, IN No. 411 OF THE SPECTATOR.

HAVING, from its importance, insisted fully on the subject of language and style in general, we shall now enter upon a critical analysis of the style of some good author. This will suggest observations that we have not hitherto had occasion to make, and will show, in a proper light, some of those which have been made.

Mr. Addison is the author chosen for this purpose. The Spectator, of which his papers are the chief ornament, is in the hands of every one, and cannot be praised too highly. The good sense and good writing, the useful morality, and the admirable vein of humor which abound in it, render it one of those standard books which have done the greatest honor to the English nation. The general character of Mr. Addison's style, as formerly given, is natural and unaffected, easy and polite; and full of those graces which a flowery imagination diffuses over writing. At the same time, though one of the most beautiful writers in the language, he is not the most correct—a circumstance which renders his composition the more proper to be the subject of our present criticism. The free and flowing manner of this amiable author, sometimes led him into inaccuracies, which the more studied circumspection and care of far inferior writers, have taught them to avoid. Remarking his beauties, therefore, which we shall have frequent occasion to do, as we proceed, we must also point out his negligences and defects. The paper with which we commence, is No. 411, the first of his celebrated Essays on the Pleasures of the Imagination. It begins thus:

'Our sight is the most perfect, and most delightful of all our senses.'

This is an excellent introductory sentence. It is clear, precise, and simple. The author lays down, in a few plain words, the proposition which he is going to illustrate. In this manner we should always commence. A first sentence should seldom be long, and never intricate.

He might have said, '*Our sight is the most perfect and*

the most delightful.' But in omitting to repeat the article *the*, he has been more judicious; since, between *perfect* and *delightful*, in the present case, there being no contrast, such a repetition was unnecessary. He proceeds:

'It fills the mind with the largest variety of ideas, converses with its objects at the greatest distance, and continues the longest in action, without being tired or satiated with its proper enjoyments.'

This sentence is remarkably harmonious, and well constructed. It possesses, indeed, most of the properties of a perfect sentence. It is entirely perspicuous. It is loaded with no unnecessary words. That quality of a good sentence, which we termed its unity, is here perfectly preserved. The members of it also grow and rise above each other in sound, till it is conducted to one of the most harmonious closes that our language admits. It has also another beauty—it is figurative, without being too much so for the subject. There is no fault in it whatever, except that a severe critic, might, perhaps, object that the epithet *large*, which he applies to *variety*, is more commonly applied to extent than to number. It is evident, however, that he employed it to avoid the repetition of the word *great*, which occurs immediately afterwards.

'The sense of feeling can, indeed, give us a notion of extension, shape, and all other ideas that enter at the eye, except colors; but, at the same time, it is very much straightened and confined in its operations, to the number, bulk, and distance of its particular objects.'

This sentence is not so happy as the preceding. It is, indeed, neither clear nor elegant. *Extension* and *shape* can, with no propriety, be called *ideas*; since they are properties of matter. Neither can we properly speak of any sense *giving us a notion of ideas*; because our senses give us the ideas themselves. The latter part of the sentence is still more confused. The sense of feeling, we are told, is *confined in its operations, to the number, bulk, and distance of its particular objects*. But is not every sense confined, as much as the sense of feeling, to the number, bulk, and distance of its own objects? The turn of expression is also here very inaccurate; and it requires the two words, *with regard*, to be inserted after the word *operations*, to make the sense clear and intelligible. The epithet *particular*, seems to be used instead of *peculiar*; but these words, though often confounded, are of very different import. *Par-*

ticular is opposed to *general*; *peculiar* is opposed to what is possessed in *common with others*.

'Our sight seems designed to supply all these defects, and may be considered as a more delicate and diffusive kind of touch, that spreads itself over an infinite number of bodies, comprehends the largest figures, and brings into our reach some of the most remote parts of the universe.'

Here again the author's style returns upon us in all its beauty. This sentence is distinct, graceful, well arranged, and musical. Its construction is so similar to that of the second sentence, that, had it immediately followed it, we should have been sensible of a faulty monotony. The interposition of another sentence, however, prevents this unpleasant effect.

'It is this sense which furnishes the imagination with its ideas; so that by the pleasures of the imagination or fancy, (which I shall use promiscuously,) I here mean such as arise from visible objects, either when we have them actually in our view; or when we call up their ideas into our minds, by paintings, statues, descriptions, or any the like occasion.'

In place of, *It is this sense which furnishes*, the author might have more briefly said, *This sense furnishes*. But the mode of expression which he has used, is here more proper. This sort of full and ample assertion, *it is this which*, is fit to be used when a proposition of importance is laid down, to which we seek to call the reader's attention. It is like pointing to the object of which we speak. The parenthesis in the middle of the sentence is not clear. He should have said, *terms which I shall use promiscuously*; as the verb *use* relates not to the pleasures of the imagination, but to the terms fancy and imagination, which he was to employ as synonymous. To call a painting or a statue *an occasion*, is not an accurate expression; nor is it very proper to speak of *calling up ideas by occasions*. The common phrase, *any such means*, would have been more natural and appropriate.

'We cannot, indeed, have a single image in the fancy, that did not make its first entrance through the sight; but we have the power of retaining, altering, and compounding those images which we have once received, into all the varieties of picture and vision that are most agreeable to the imagination; for, by this faculty, a man in a dungeon is capable of entertaining himself with scenes and landscapes more beautiful than any that can be found in the whole compass of nature.'

In one member of this sentence there is an inaccuracy in syntax. It is very proper to say, *altering and compounding those images which we have once received, into all the varieties of picture and vision*: but we can with no propriety say, *retaining them into all the varieties*; and yet, the arrangement requires this construction. This error might have been avoided by arranging the passage in the following manner: 'We have the power of retaining, altering, and compounding those images which we have once received; and of forming them into all the varieties of picture and vision.' The latter part of the sentence is perspicuous and elegant.

'There are few words in the English language which are employed in a more loose and uncircumscribed sense, than those of the fancy and the imagination.'

Except when some assertion of consequence is advanced, these little words, *it is*, and *there are*, ought to be avoided as redundant and enfeebling. The first two words of this sentence, therefore, would have been much better omitted. The article prefixed to *fancy* and *imagination*, should also have been left out, since he does not mean the powers of *the fancy and the imagination*, but the words only. The sentence should have run thus: 'Few words in the English language are employed in a more loose and uncircumscribed sense, than fancy and imagination.'

'I therefore thought it necessary to fix and determine the notion of these two words, as I intend to make use of them in the thread of my following speculations, that the reader may conceive rightly what is the subject which I proceed upon.'

Though the words *fix* and *determine*, may, at first sight, appear synonymous, yet they are not so. We *fix* what is *loose*; that is, we confine the word to its proper place, that it may not fluctuate in our imagination, and pass from one idea to another; and we *determine* what is *uncircumscribed*; that is, we ascertain its limits, we draw the circle round it, that we may see its boundaries. These two words, therefore, are applied here with peculiar grace and delicacy.

The notion of these words, is rather a harsh phrase; at least, it is not so commonly used as the *meaning of these words*. As I intend to make use of them in the thread of my speculations, is, also, evidently faulty. A sort of metaphor is improperly mixed with words in their literal sense. He should have simply said, as I intend to make use of them in

my following speculations. The subject which I proceed upon, is an ungraceful close of a sentence; it should have been, *the subject upon which I proceed.*

'I must therefore desire him to remember, that by the pleasures of the imagination, I mean only such pleasures as arise originally from sight, and that I divide these pleasures into two kinds.'

As the last sentence began with, *I therefore thought it necessary to fix,* it is careless to begin this sentence in a manner so very similar—*I must therefore desire him to remember*; especially as the small variation of using, *on this account,* or, *for this reason,* in place of *therefore,* would have amended the style. In the phrase, *I mean only such pleasures,* the word *only* is not in its proper place. It is not intended here to qualify the verb *mean*, but *such pleasures*; and ought, therefore, to be placed immediately after the latter.

'My design being, first of all, to discourse of those primary pleasures of the imagination, which entirely proceed from such objects as are before our eyes; and, in the next place, to speak of those secondary pleasures of the imagination, which flow from the ideas of visible objects, when the objects are not actually before the eye, but are called up into our memories, or formed into agreeable visions of things, that are either absent or fictitious.'

In laying down the division of a subject, it is of importance to study neatness and brevity as much as possible. This sentence is not happy in this respect. It is somewhat clogged by a tedious phraseology. *My design being first of all, to discourse—in the next place to speak of such objects as are before our eyes—things that are either absent or fictitious.* Several words might have been omitted here, and the style rendered more neat and compact.

'The pleasures of the imagination, taken in their full extent, are not so gross as those of sense, nor so refined as those of the understanding.'

This sentence is clear and elegant.

'The last are indeed more preferable, because they are founded on some new knowledge or improvement in the mind of man: yet it must be confessed, that those of the imagination are as great and as transporting as the other.'

The phrase *more preferable*, in the beginning of this sentence, is so palpable an inaccuracy, that we are surprised how it could have escaped the observation of Mr. Addison.

It must be farther observed, that the proposition contained in the last member of this sentence, is neither clear nor neatly expressed—it *must be confessed, that those of the imagination are as great, and as transporting as the other.* In the beginning of this sentence, he had called the pleasures of the understanding *the last*; and he concludes with observing, that those of the imagination are as great and transporting *as the other.* Now, besides that *the other* makes not a proper contrast with *the last*, it is left doubtful, whether by *the other*, are not meant the pleasures of the understanding, or the pleasures of sense, for it may refer to either by the construction; though, no doubt, it was intended to refer to the pleasures of the understanding only.

‘A beautiful prospect delights the soul as much as a demonstration; and a description in Homer has charmed more readers than a chapter in Aristotle.’

This is a good illustration of what had been asserted, and is expressed with that elegance for which Mr. Addison is so remarkable.

‘Besides, the pleasures of the imagination have this advantage above those of the understanding, that they are more obvious, and more easy to be acquired.’

This is also an unexceptionable sentence.

‘It is but opening the eye, and the scene enters.’

This sentence is lively and picturesque. By the gayety and briskness which it gives the style, it shows the great advantage of intermixing long and short sentences. We must remark, however, a small inaccuracy—a *scene* cannot be said to *enter*: an *actor* enters; but a *scene appears*, or *presents itself*.

‘The colors paint themselves on the fancy, with very little attention to thought or application of mind in the beholder.’

This is another beautiful illustration; and carried on with that agreeable floweriness of fancy and style, which is so well suited to those pleasures of the imagination, of which the author is treating.

‘We are struck, we know not how, with the symmetry of any thing we see, and immediately assent to the beauty of an object, without inquiring into the particular causes and occasions of it.’

We *assent* to the truth of a proposition; but cannot, without impropriety, be said to *assent to the beauty of an object.* *Acknowledge* would have expressed the sense with more propriety. In the conclusion, too, both *particular* and *occa*

sions are superfluous words ; and the pronoun *it*, is, in some measure, ambiguous, its reference not being clear.

'A man of a polite imagination is let into a great many pleasures, that the vulgar are not capable of receiving.'

Polite, is perhaps, applied with more propriety to manners, than to the mind or imagination. There is nothing farther to be observed on this sentence, unless it be, the use of *that* for a relative pronoun, instead of *which*—a usage which is too frequent with Mr. Addison. *Which* is esteemed preferable to *that*, in all cases, except where it is necessary to avoid an ungraceful repetition.

'He can converse with a picture, and find an agreeable companion in a statue. He meets with a secret refreshment in a description ; and often feels a greater satisfaction in the prospects of fields and meadows, than another does in the possession. It gives him, indeed, a kind of property in every thing he sees ; and makes the most rude uncultivated parts of nature administer to his pleasure : so that he looks upon the world, as it were in another light, and discovers in it a multitude of charms that conceal themselves from the generality of mankind.'

This sentence is easy, flowing, and harmonious. We must, however, observe a slight inaccuracy. It gives him a kind of property—to this *it*, there is no antecedent in the whole paragraph. To discover its connection, we must look back to the third sentence preceding, which begins with, *a man of polite imagination*. This phrase, *polite imagination*, is the only antecedent to which *it* can refer ; and even this is not a proper antecedent, since it stands in the genitive case, as the qualification only of *a man*.

'There are, indeed, but very few, who know how to be idle and innocent, or have a relish of any pleasures that are not criminal ; every diversion they take, is at the expense of some one virtue or another, and their very first step out of business is into vice or folly.'

This sentence is truly elegant, musical, and correct.

'A man should endeavor, therefore, to make the sphere of his innocent pleasures as wide as possible, that he may retire into them with safety, and find in them, such a satisfaction as a wise man would not blush to take.'

This also is a good sentence, and gives occasion to no material remark.

'Of this nature are those of the imagination, which do not require such a bent of thought as is necessary to our

more serious employments, nor, at the same time, suffer the mind to sink into that indolence and remissness, which are apt to accompany our more sensual delights ; but like a gentle exercise to the faculties, awaken them from sloth and idleness, without putting them upon any labor or difficulty.'

The beginning of this sentence is not correct, being too loosely connected with the preceding one. *Of this nature*, says he, *are those of the imagination*. It might be asked, of what nature ? For the preceding sentence had not described the nature of any class of pleasures. He had said that it was every man's duty to make the sphere of his innocent pleasures as extensive as possible, in order that, within that sphere, he might find a safe retreat and a laudable satisfaction. The transition, therefore, is made loosely. It would have been better had he said, 'This advantage we gain,' or, 'This satisfaction we enjoy,' by means of the pleasures of the imagination. The rest of the sentence is unexceptionable.

'We might here add, that the pleasures of the fancy are more conducive to health than those of the understanding, which are worked out by dint of thinking, and attended with too violent a labor of the brain.'

On this sentence, nothing occurs deserving of remark, except that, *worked out by dint of thinking*, which borders too much on vulgar and colloquial language, to be proper for being employed in a polished composition.

'Delightful scenes, whether in nature, painting, or poetry, have a kindly influence on the body, as well as the mind, and not only serve to clear and brighten the imagination, but are able to disperse grief and melancholy, and to set the animal spirits in pleasing and agreeable motions. For this reason, Sir Francis Bacon, in his Essay upon Health, has not thought it improper to prescribe to his reader a poem, or a prospect, where he particularly dissuades him from knotty and subtle disquisitions, and advises him to pursue studies that fill the mind with splendid and illustrious objects, as histories, fables, and contemplations of nature.'

In the latter of these two sentences, a member of the period is improperly placed—where he particularly dissuades him from knotty and subtle disquisitions : these words should, doubtless, have been placed in the following manner : Sir Francis Bacon, in his Essay upon Health, where he particularly dissuades the reader from knotty and subtle speculations, has not thought it improper, &c.

'I have, in this paper, by way of introduction, settled the notion of those pleasures of the imagination, which are the subject of my present undertaking; and endeavored, by several considerations, to recommend to my readers the pursuit of those pleasures; I shall, in my next paper, examine the several sources from whence these pleasures are derived.'

These two concluding sentences afford examples of the proper collocation of circumstances in a period. We have formerly showed, that a judicious collocation of them is a matter of difficulty. Had the following incidental circumstances—*by way of introduction—by several considerations—in this paper—in the next paper*—been placed in any other situation, the sentence would neither have been so neat nor so clear as it is by the present construction.

LECTURE XXI.

CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE STYLE IN No. 412 OF THE SPECTATOR.

THE observations which have occurred in reviewing that paper of Mr. Addison, which was the subject of the last lecture, sufficiently show, that in the writings of an author of the most happy genius, and distinguished talents, inaccuracies may sometimes be found. Though such inaccuracies may be overbalanced by so many beauties as render style highly pleasing and agreeable upon the whole, yet it must be desirable to every writer to avoid, as far as possible, inaccuracy of any kind. As the subject, therefore, is of importance, it may be useful to carry on this criticism throughout one or two subsequent papers of the Spectator. We proceed to the examination of paper No. 412.

‘I shall first consider those pleasures of the imagination, which arise from the actual view and survey of outward objects : and these, I think, all proceed from the sight of what is great, uncommon, or beautiful.’

This sentence is simple and distinct. The words *view* and *survey*, as here used, are not altogether synonymous ; as the former may be supposed to import mere inspection, and the latter, more deliberate examination ; yet, in the present case, either of them, perhaps, would have been sufficient.

‘There may, indeed, be something so terrible or offensive, that the horror, or loathsomeness of an object, may overbear the pleasure which results from its novelty, greatness, or beauty ; but still there will be such a mixture of delight in the very disgust it gives us, as any of these three qualifications are most conspicuous and prevailing.’

This must be acknowledged to be an unfortunate sentence. The sense is obscure and embarrassed, and the expression loose and irregular. In the beginning, *something* and *object* are wrongly placed. The natural arrangement would have been, *there may, indeed, be something in an object so terrible or offensive, that the horror or loathsomeness of it may overbear*. These two epithets, *horror* or *loathsomeness*, are awkwardly joined together. *Loathsomeness* may be applied

to objects, but *horror* cannot; it is a feeling excited in the mind. The language would have been much more correct, had our author said, *there may, indeed, be something in an object so terrible or offensive, that the horror or disgust which it excites may overbear.* *Terrible or offensive*, would then have expressed the qualities of an object; *horror or disgust*, the corresponding sentiments which these qualities produce in the mind.

In the latter part of the sentence also, there are several inaccuracies. When he says, *there will be such a mixture of delight in the very disgust it gives us, as any of these three qualifications are most conspicuous*, the construction seems hardly grammatical. He certainly meant to say, *such a mixture of delight as is proportioned to the degree in which any of these three qualifications are conspicuous.* The plural verb *are*, is improperly joined to *any of these three qualifications*; for as *any* is here used distributively, and means *any one of these three qualifications*, the corresponding verb ought to have been singular.

'By greatness, I do not only mean the bulk of any single object, but the largeness of a whole view, considered as one entire piece.'

A part of this sentence, it will be recollected, was criticised in a former lecture, and corrected in the following manner: *By greatness, I do not mean the bulk of any single object only, but the largeness of a whole view.* As the closing phrase, *considered as one entire piece*, is deficient, both in dignity and propriety, it might better have been altogether omitted.

'Such are the prospects of an open champaign country, a vast uncultivated desert, of huge heaps of mountains, high rocks and precipices, or a wide expanse of waters, where we are not struck with the novelty, or beauty of the sight, but with that rude kind of magnificence which appears in many of these stupendous works of nature.'

This sentence is, in the main, beautiful. The objects presented are all of them noble, selected with judgment, arranged with propriety, and accompanied with proper epithets. The sentence, however, it must be observed, is too loosely, and not very grammatically connected with the preceding one. He says, *such are the prospects*; *such*, signifies of that nature or quality; which necessarily presupposes some adjective, or word descriptive of quality, going before, to which it refers. But in the foregoing sentence

there is no such adjective. He had spoken of *greatness* in the abstract only; and therefore *such* has no distinct antecedent to which we can refer it. The sentence would have been introduced with more grammatical propriety, by saying, *to this class belong, or under this head are ranged the prospects, &c.* The *of* which is prefixed to *huge heaps of mountains*, is superfluous, and has, perhaps, been an error in the printing. The word *many*, also, preceding *of these stupendous works of nature*, might better have been omitted, as it seems to except some of them.

‘Our imagination loves to be filled with an object, or to grasp at any thing that is too big for its capacity. We are flung into a pleasing astonishment at such unbounded views; and feel a delightful stillness and amazement in the soul, at the apprehension of them.’

The language here is elegant, and several of the expressions remarkably happy. There is nothing which requires any animadversion except the close, *at the apprehension of them*. This is not only languid and enfeebling, but *the apprehension of views*, is a phrase destitute of all propriety, and, indeed, scarcely intelligible. Had this adjection been entirely omitted, it would have been a great improvement.

‘The mind of man naturally hates every thing that looks like a restraint upon it, and is apt to fancy itself under a sort of confinement, when the sight is pent up in a narrow compass, and shortened on every side by the neighborhood of walls and mountains. On the contrary, a spacious horizon is an image of liberty, where the eye has room to range abroad, to expatiate at large on the immensity of its views, and to lose itself amidst the variety of objects, that offer themselves to its observation. Such wide and undetermined prospects are pleasing to the fancy, as the speculations of eternity, or infinitude, are to the understanding.’

Our author’s style appears here in all that native beauty which cannot be too much praised. The numbers flow smoothly, and with a graceful harmony. The words carry a certain amplitude and fullness, well suited to the nature of the subject; and the members of the periods rise in a gradation accommodated to the rise of the thought.

‘But if there be a beauty or uncommonness joined with this grandeur, as in a troubled ocean, a heaven adorned with stars and meteors, or the spacious landscape cut out into rivers, woods, rocks, and meadows, the pleasure still grows upon us as it arises from more than a single principle.’

Had the article prefixed to *beauty*, in the beginning of this sentence, been omitted, the style would have been improved. And instead of *a landscape cut into rivers, &c., diversified by rivers, &c.*, would have been better.

'Every thing that is new or uncommon, raises a pleasure in the imagination, because it fills the soul with an agreeable surprise, gratifies its curiosity, and gives it an idea of which it was not before-possessed. We are, indeed, so often conversant with one set of objects, and tired out with so many repeated shows of the same things, that whatever is new or uncommon contributes a little to vary human life, and to divert our minds, for a while, with the strangeness of its appearance. It serves us for a kind of refreshment, and takes off from the satiety we are apt to complain of in our usual and ordinary entertainments.'

Though the style in these sentences flows in an easy and agreeable manner, yet it is necessary to observe, that there are two phrases which may be altered to advantage. The first is the following—*raises a pleasure in the imagination*, which is certainly flat and feeble, and might easily be amended by saying, *affords pleasure to the imagination*; and the second is towards the end, where two of's grate harshly on the ear—*takes off from that satiety we are apt to complain of*. Here the correction is as easily made as in the other case, by substituting, *diminishes that satiety of which we are apt to complain*.

'It is this which bestows charms on a monster, and makes even the imperfections of nature please us. It is this that recommends variety, where the mind is every instant called off to something new, and the attention not suffered to dwell too long, and waste itself on any particular object. It is this, likewise, that improves what is great or beautiful, and makes it afford the mind a double entertainment.'

Still the style proceeds with perspicuity, grace, and harmony. The full and ample assertion with which each of these sentences is introduced, frequent on many occasions with our author, is here proper and seasonable; as it was his intention to magnify, as much as possible, the effect of novelty and variety, and to draw our attention to them. His frequent use of *that* instead of *which*, is another peculiarity of his style; but, on this occasion in particular, cannot be commended; as, *it is this which*, seems, in every view, to be better than, *it is this that*, three times repeated.

'Groves, fields, and meadows, are, at any season of the

year, pleasant to look upon ; but never so much as in the opening of the spring, when they are all new and fresh, with their first gloss upon them, and not yet too much accustomed and familiar to the eye.'

In the expression, *never so much as in the opening of spring*, there appears to be a small error in grammar ; for when the construction is filled up, it must be read, *never so much pleasant*. Had he, to avoid this, said *never so much so*, the grammatical error would have been prevented, but the language would still have been awkward. Better to have said, *but never so agreeable as in the opening of the spring*.

'For this reason, there is nothing that more enlivens a prospect than rivers, jetdeaus, or falls of water, where the scene is perpetually shifting and entertaining the sight, every moment, with something that is new. We are quickly tired with looking at hills and vallies, where every thing continues fixed and settled, in the same place and posture ; but find our thoughts a little agitated and relieved at the sight of such objects as are ever in motion, and sliding away from beneath the eye of the beholder.'

The first of these sentences is connected in too loose a manner with that which immediately preceded it. When he says, *for this reason there is nothing which more enlivens, &c.*, we are entitled to look for the *reason* in what he had just before said. But there we find no *reason* for what he is now going to assert, except that groves and meadows are most pleasant in the spring. It is, indeed, one of the defects of this amiable writer, that his sentences are often too negligently connected with one another ; and though his meaning may be gathered from the tenor of his discourse, yet his negligence prevents his sense from striking us with that force and evidence, which a more accurate juncture of parts would have produced. The close, however, is uncommonly fine, and carries as much expressive harmony as the language can admit. It seems to paint what he is describing, at once to the eye and the ear. *Such objects as are ever in motion and sliding away from beneath the eye of the beholder*.

'But there is nothing that makes its way more directly to the soul than beauty, which immediately diffuses a secret satisfaction and complacency through the imagination, and gives a finishing to any thing that is great or uncommon. The very first discovery of it strikes the mind with an inward joy, and spreads a cheerfulness and delight through all the faculties.'

Some degree of verbosity may be here discovered, as phrases are repeated which are little more than the echo of one another; but, at the same time, it must be admitted, that this full and flowing style, even though it be somewhat redundant, is not unsuitable to the gayety of the subject on which the author is entering, and is more allowable here than it would have been on some other occasions.

'There is not, perhaps, any real beauty or deformity more in one piece of matter than another; because we might have been so made, that whatever now appears loathsome to us, might have shown itself agreeable; but we find by experience, that there are several modifications of matter, which the mind, without any previous consideration, pronounces at first sight beautiful or deformed.'

In this sentence there is nothing to be noticed, except that the word *more*, towards the beginning, is not in its proper place, and that the preposition *in*, is wanting before *another*. The phrase ought to have stood thus: *Beauty or deformity in one piece of matter, more than in another.*

'Thus we see, that every different species of sensible creatures, has its different notions of beauty, and that each of them is most affected with the beauties of its own kind. This is no where more remarkable, than in birds of the same shape and proportion, where we often see the male determined in his courtship by the single grain of tincture of a feather, and never discovering any charms but in the color of its species.'

Neither is there here any particular elegance of language. *Different sense of beauty*, in the beginning, would have been better than *different notions of beauty*; and at the close, the author should not have used the neuter gender in the phrase, *color of its species*, particularly as he had said in the same sentence, that the *male was determined in his courtship*.

'There is a second kind of beauty, that we find in the several products of art and nature, which does not work in the imagination with that warmth and violence, as the beauty that appears in our proper species, but is apt, however, to raise in us a secret delight, and a kind of fondness for the places or objects in which we discover it.'

Still we find little to praise. This *second kind of beauty*, he says, *we find in the several products of art and nature*. He doubtless means, not in all, but *in several of the products of art and nature*, and ought so to have expressed himself; and in the place of *products*, to have used also the more pro-

per word *productions*. When he adds, that this kind of beauty *does not work in the imagination with that warmth and violence as the beauty that appears in our proper species*; the language would certainly have been more pure and elegant, had he said, that it *does not work upon the imagination with such warmth and violence, as the beauty that appears in our own species*.

'This consists either in the gayety or variety of colors, in the symmetry and proportion of parts, in the arrangement and disposition of bodies, or in a just mixture and concurrence of all together. Among these several kinds of beauty, the eye takes most delight in colors.'

To the language here, no objection can be made.

'We no where meet with a more glorious or pleasing show in nature, than what appears in the heavens at the rising and setting of the sun, which is wholly made up of those different stains of light, that show themselves in clouds of a different situation.'

The chief ground of criticism on this sentence, is the disjointed situation of the relative *which*. Grammatically it refers to *the rising and setting sun*; but the author meant that it should refer to *the show* which appears in the heavens at that time. It is too common among authors, when they are writing without much care, to make such particles as *this* and *which*, refer not to any particular antecedent word, but to the tenor of some phrase, or, perhaps, the scope of some whole sentence, which has gone before. This practice saves them trouble in arranging their words and periods; but though it may leave their meaning intelligible, yet it renders it much less perspicuous, determined, and precise, than it might otherwise have been.

'For this reason we find the poets, who are always ad-dressing themselves to the imagination, borrowing more of their epithets from colors than from any other topic.'

On this sentence nothing occurs to be remarked, except that it is too loosely connected with the one that immediately precedes it.

'As the fancy delights in every thing that is great, strange, or beautiful, and is still more pleased, the more it finds of these perfections, in the same object, so it is capable of receiving a new satisfaction by the assistance of another sense.'

Another sense, here means, grammatically, *another sense than fancy*; for there is nothing else in the period to which

it can at all be opposed. He had not, for some time, made mention of any *sense* whatever. He forgot to add, what was unquestionably in his thoughts, *another sense than that of sight.*

'Thus any continued sound, as the music of birds, or a fall of water, awakens every moment the mind of the beholder, and makes him more attentive to the several beauties of the place which lie before him. Thus, if there arises a frequency of smells or perfumes, they heighten the pleasures of the imagination, and make even the colors and verdure of the landscape appear more agreeable; for the ideas of both senses recommend each other, and are pleasanter together than when they enter the mind separately; as the different colors of a picture, when they are well disposed, set off one another, and receive an additional beauty from the advantage of their situation.'

With regard to the style here, nothing appears exceptionable. The flow, both of language and of ideas, is very agreeable. The author continues, to the end, the same pleasing train of thought, which had run through the rest of the paper; and leaves us agreeably employed in comparing together different degrees of beauty.

LECTURE XXII.

CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE STYLE IN NO. 413 OF THE SPECTATOR.

‘**THOUGH** in yesterday’s paper we considered how every thing that is great, new, or beautiful, is apt to affect the imagination with pleasure, we must own, that it is impossible for us to assign the necessary cause of this pleasure, because we know neither the nature of an idea, nor the substance of a human soul, which might help us to discover the conformity or disagreeableness of the one to the other ; and therefore, for want of such a light, all that we can do in speculations of this kind, is, to reflect on those operations of the soul that are most agreeable, and to range, under their proper heads, what is pleasing or displeasing to the mind, without being able to trace out the several necessary and efficient causes from whence the pleasure or displeasure arises.’

This sentence, considered as an introductory one, must be acknowledged to be very faulty. An introductory sentence should never contain any thing that may fatigue or puzzle the reader. When an author is entering on a new branch of his subject, informing us of what he has done, and what he proposes farther to do, we naturally expect that he should express himself in the simplest manner possible. But the sentence now before us is crowded and indistinct ; containing three separate propositions, which, as shall afterwards be shown, required separate sentences to unfold them. Mr. Addison’s chief excellence lay in describing and painting. There he is great ; but in methodising, he is not so eminent.

Though in yesterday’s paper we considered. The import of *though* is *notwithstanding that*. When it appears in the beginning of a sentence, its relative, generally, is *yet* ; and it is employed to warn us, after we have been informed of some truth, that we are not to infer from it some other thing which we might, perhaps, have expected to follow. But it is evident, that there was no such opposition between the subject of yesterday’s paper, and what the author is now going to say, as to render the use of this adversative particle,

though, either necessary or proper in the introduction. *We considered how every thing that is great, new, or beautiful, is apt to affect the imagination with pleasure.* The adverb *how* signifies, either the means by which, or the manner in which, something is done. But neither one nor the other of these had been considered by our author. He had illustrated the fact alone, that they do affect the imagination with pleasure; and, with respect to the *how*, he is so far from having considered it, that he is just now going to show that it cannot be explained, and that we must rest contented with the knowledge of the fact alone, and of its purpose and final cause. *The substance of a human soul*, is certainly a very uncouth expression, and there appears no reason why he should have varied from the word *nature*, which would have been applicable equally to *idea* and to *soul*.

Which might help us, our author proceeds, *to discover the conformity or disagreeableness of the one to the other.* The *which*, at the beginning of this member of the period, is surely ungrammatical, as it is a relative, without any antecedent in all the sentence. It refers, by the construction, to *the nature of an idea, or the substance of a human soul*; but this is by no means the reference which the author intended. His meaning is, that *our knowing* the nature of an idea, and the substance of a human soul, might help us to discover the conformity or disagreeableness of the one to the other; and, therefore, the syntax absolutely required the word *knowledge* to have been inserted as the antecedent to *which*. The phrase of discovering *the conformity or disagreeableness of the one to the other* is likewise exceptionable; for *disagreeableness* neither forms a proper contrast to the other word, *conformity*, nor expresses what the author here meant—that is, a certain unsuitableness or want of conformity to the nature of the soul. In fact, it would have been much better to have omitted this member of the sentence altogether.

And therefore, the sentence goes on, *for want of such a light, all that we can do in speculations of this kind, is, to reflect on those operations of the soul that are most agreeable, and to range under their proper heads what is pleasing or displeasing to the mind.* The two expressions in the beginning of this member, *therefore*, and *for want of such a light*, evidently refer to the same thing; and one or the other of them, therefore, had better been omitted. Instead of *to range under their proper heads*, the language would have been smoother, if *their* had been left out. Had the

whole of the last member of the sentence been omitted, and the period closed with the words, *pleasing or displeasing to the mind*, it would have been an improvement; as all that follows suggests no idea that had not been fully conveyed in the preceding part of the sentence.

Having now finished the analysis of this long sentence, we proceed in the examination of the sentences that follow.

‘Final causes lie more bare and open to our observation, as there are often a great variety that belong to the same effect; and these, though they are not altogether so satisfactory, are generally more useful than the other, as they give us greater occasion of admiring the goodness and wisdom of the first contriver.’

Though some difference might be traced between the sense of *bare* and *open*, yet, as they are here employed, they are so nearly synonymous, that one of them was sufficient. It would have been enough to have said, *Final causes lie more open to observation*. In the phrase, *a great variety that belong to the same effect*, the expression, strictly considered, is not altogether proper. The accessory is properly said to belong to the principal; not the principal to the accessory. Now, an effect is considered as the accessory or consequence of its cause; and therefore, though we might well say a variety of effects belong to the same cause, it seems not so proper to say, that a variety of causes belong to the same effect.

‘One of the final causes of our delight in any thing that is great, may be this: The Supreme Author of our being has so formed the soul of man, that nothing but himself can be its last, adequate, and proper happiness. Because, therefore, a great part of our happiness must arise from the contemplation of his being, that he might give our souls a just relish of such contemplation, he has made them naturally delight in the apprehension of what is great or unlimited.’

The concurrence of two conjunctions, *because therefore*, forms rather a harsh and displeasing beginning of the last of these sentences; and, in the close, one would think that the author might have devised a happier word than *apprehension*, to be applied to what is *unlimited*.

‘Our admiration, which is a very pleasing motion of the mind, immediately rises at the consideration of any object that takes up a good deal of room in the fancy, and, by consequence, will improve into the highest pitch of astonishment and devotion, when we contemplate his nature, that is

neither circumscribed by time nor place, nor to be comprehended by the largest capacity of a created being.'

Here our author's style rises beautifully along with the thought. However inaccurate he may sometimes be, when coolly philosophising, yet, whenever his fancy is awakened by description, or his mind warmed with some glowing sentiment, he immediately becomes great, and discovers, in his language, the hand of a master.

'He has annexed a secret pleasure to the idea of any thing that is new or uncommon, that he might encourage us in the pursuit of knowledge, and engage us to search into the wonders of creation; for every new idea brings such a pleasure along with it, as rewards the pain we have taken in its acquisition, and consequently, serves as a motive to put us on fresh discoveries.'

The language in this sentence is clear and precise: only, we cannot but observe, in this, and the two following sentences, which are constructed in the same manner, a strong proof of Mr. Addison's unreasonable partiality to the particle *that*, in preference to *which*. *Annexed a secret pleasure to the idea of any thing that is new or uncommon, that he might encourage us.* Here, the first *that* is a relative pronoun, and the next *that* is a conjunction. This confusion of sounds serves to embarrass style. It would certainly have been much better to have said, *the idea of any thing which is new or uncommon, that he might encourage.* The expression with which the sentence concludes, *a motive to put us upon fresh discoveries*, is flat and improper. He should have said, *serves as a motive, inciting us to make fresh discoveries.*

'He has made every thing that is beautiful in our own species, pleasant, that all creatures might be tempted to multiply their kind, and fill the world with inhabitants; for, 'tis very remarkable, that, wherever nature is crost in the production of a monster, (the result of any unnatural mixture,) the breed is incapable of propagating its likeness, and of founding a new order of creatures; so that, unless all animals were allured by the beauty of their own species, generation would be at an end, and the earth unpeopled.'

Here we must, however reluctant, return to the employment of censure; for this is among the worst sentences our author ever wrote. Taken as a whole, it is extremely deficient in unity. Instead of a complete proposition, it contains a sort of chain of reasoning, the links of which are so

badly put together, that it is with difficulty we can trace the connection; and unless we take the trouble of perusing it several times, it will leave nothing on the mind but an indistinct and obscure impression.

Besides this general fault, respecting the meaning, it contains some great inaccuracies in language. First, God's having made every thing which *is beautiful* in our species, (that is, in the human species,) pleasant, is certainly no motive for *all creatures*, for beasts, and birds, and fishes, to *multiply their kind*. What the author meant to say, though he has expressed himself in so erroneous a manner, undoubtedly was, 'In all the different orders of creatures, he has made every thing, which is beautiful in their own species, pleasant, that all creatures might be tempted to multiply their kind.' The second member of the sentence is still worse. *For it is very remarkable, that wherever nature is crost in the production of a monster, &c.* The reason here given for the preceding assertion, intimated by the casual particle *for*, is far from being obvious. The connection of thought is not readily apparent, and would have acquired an intermediate step, to render it distinct. But what does he mean, by *nature being crost in the production of a monster*? One might understand him to mean, 'disappointed in its intention of producing a monster;' as when we say, one is crost in his pursuits, we mean, that he is disappointed in accomplishing the end that he intended. Had he said, *crost by the production of a monster*, the sense would have been more intelligible. But the proper rectification of the expression would be to insert the adverb *as*, before the preposition *in*, after this manner; *whenever nature is crost, as in the production of a monster*.

'In the last place, he has made every thing that is beautiful, in all other objects, pleasant, or rather has made so many objects appear beautiful, that he might render the whole creation more gay and delightful. He has given almost every thing about us the power of raising an agreeable idea in the imagination; so that it is impossible for us to behold his works with coldness or indifference, and to survey so many beauties without a secret satisfaction and complacency.'

The idea, here, is so just, and the language so clear, flowing, and agreeable, that, to remark any diffuseness which may be attributed to these sentences, would be justly esteemed hypercritical.

'Things would make but a poor appearance to the eye, if we saw them only in their proper figures and motions : and what reason can we assign for their exciting in us many of those ideas which are different from any thing that exists in the objects themselves, (for such are light and colors,) were it not to add supernumerary ornaments to the universe, and make it more agreeable to the imagination?'

In this sentence, in the phrase *exciting in us many of those ideas which are different from any thing that exists in the objects*, there is great inaccuracy. No one, surely, ever imagined that our ideas exist in the objects. Ideas, it is agreed on all hands, can exist no where but in the mind. What our author should have said, is, *exciting in us many ideas of qualities which are different from any thing that exists in the objects*. The ungraceful parenthesis which follows, *for such are light and colors*, had far better have been avoided, and incorporated with the rest of the sentence.

'We are every where entertained with pleasing shows and apparitions. We discover imaginary glory in the heavens and in the earth, and see some of this visionary beauty poured out upon the whole creation ; but what a rough unsightly sketch of nature should we be entertained with, did all her coloring disappear, and the several distinctions of light and shade vanish? In short, our souls are delightfully lost and bewildered in a pleasing delusion ; and we walk about like the enchanted hero of a romance, who sees beautiful castles, woods, and meadows ; and at the same time, hears the warbling of birds and the purling of streams ; but, upon the finishing of some secret spell, the fantastic scene breaks up, and the disconsolate knight finds himself on a barren heath, or in a solitary desert.'

After having been obliged to point out several inaccuracies, we return with much more pleasure to the display of beauties, for which we have now full scope ; for these two sentences are such as do the highest honor to Mr. Addison's talents as a writer. Warmed with the idea he had seized, his delicate sensibility to the beauty of nature, is finely displayed in the illustration of it. The style is flowing and full, without being too diffuse. It is flowery, but not gaudy ; elevated, but not ostentatious.

Amid this blaze of beauties, however, it is necessary for us to notice one or two inaccuracies. In the phrase, *what a rough unsightly sketch of nature should we be entertained with*, the preposition *with* should have been placed at the

beginning, rather than at the end of this member; and the word *entertained*, is both improperly applied, and carelessly repeated from the former part of the sentence. *With what a rough unsightly sketch of nature should we be presented*, would, here, have been more proper. At the close of the second sentence, where it is said, *the fantastic scene breaks up*, the expression is lively, but not altogether justifiable. An assembly *breaks up*; a scene *closes* or *disappears*. Excepting these two slight inaccuracies, the style, here, is not only correct, but perfectly elegant.

‘It is not improbable, that something like this may be the state of the soul after its first separation, in respect of the images it will receive from matter; though, indeed, the ideas of colors are so pleasing and beautiful in the imagination, that it is possible the soul will not be deprived of them, but, perhaps, find them excited by some other occasional cause, as they are at present, by the different impressions of the subtle matter on the organ of the sight.’

In this sentence there is a sensible falling off from the beauty of what went before. It is deficient in unity—its parts are not sufficiently compacted—it contains, besides, some faulty expressions. When it is said, *something like this may be the state of the soul*, to the pronoun *this*, there is no determined antecedent; it refers to the general import of the preceding description, which renders the style very obscure—the *state of the soul after its first separation*, appears to be an incomplete phrase, and *first*, seems a useless, and even an improper word. It would have been more distinct had he said, *state of the soul immediately on its separation from the body*.

‘I have here supposed, that my reader is acquainted with that great modern discovery, which is at present universally acknowledged by all the inquirers into natural philosophy: namely, that light and colors, as apprehended by the imagination, are only ideas in the mind, and not qualities that have any existence in matter. As this is a truth which has been proved incontestably by many modern philosophers, and is, indeed, one of the finest speculations in that science, if the English reader would see the notion explained at large, he may find in the eighth chapter of the second book of Mr. Locke’s *Essay on the Human Understanding*.’

In these two concluding sentences, the author appears to write rather carelessly. In the first of them, a manifest tautology occurs, when he speaks of what is *universally*

acknowledged by all inquirers. In the second, when he calls *a truth which has been incontestibly proved*, first, *a speculation*, and afterwards *a notion*, the language is, certainly, not very accurate. When he adds, *one of the finest speculations in that science*, it does not, at first, appear what science he means. One would imagine he meant to refer to *modern philosophers*; for *natural philosophy* (to which, doubtless, he refers) stands at much too great a distance to be the proper antecedent to the pronoun *that*. The circumstance towards the close, is corrected by Lord Kames thus: *the English reader, if he would see the notion explained at large, may find it, &c.*

LECTURE XXIII.

ELOQUENCE, OR PUBLIC SPEAKING—HISTORY OF ELOQUENCE—GRECIAN ELOQUENCE—DEMOSTHENES.

HAVING finished that part of the course which relates to language and style, we are now to examine the subjects upon which style is employed. We begin with eloquence, or public speaking. In treating of this, we shall consider the different kinds and subjects of public speaking; the manner suited to each; the proper distribution and management of all the parts of a discourse; and the proper pronunciation or delivery of it. But before we enter upon any of these heads, it may be proper to take a view of the nature of eloquence in general, and of the state in which it has subsisted in different ages and countries.

Eloquence is the art of persuasion; or the art of speaking in such a manner as to attain the end for which we speak. Its most essential requisites are, solid argument, clear method, and an appearance of sincerity in the speaker, with such graces of style and utterance, as shall invite and command attention. Good sense must be its foundation. Without this, no man can be truly eloquent; for fools can persuade none but fools. In order to persuade a man of sense we must first convince him; and this can only be done, by satisfying his understanding of the reasonableness of what we propose to his consideration. This leads us to observe, that convincing and persuading, though sometimes confounded, are of very different import. Conviction affects the understanding only; persuasion, the will and the practice. It is the business of the philosopher to convince us of truth; it is the business of the orator to persuade us to act agree-

Having finished that part of the course which relates to language and style, what are we now to examine? With what do we begin; and in what order shall we treat of it? But before we enter upon any of these heads, a review of what may be proper? What is eloquence; and what are its most essential requisites? What must be its foundation; and why? In order to persuade a man of sense, what is necessary; and how only can this be done? To what observation does this lead; and how is this illustrated?

ably to it, by engaging our affections in its favor. Conviction is, however, one avenue to the heart; and it is that which an orator must first attempt to gain; for no persuasion can be stable, which is not founded on conviction. But the orator must not be satisfied with convincing only: he must address himself to the passions; he must paint to the fancy, and touch the heart; and hence, besides solid argument and clear method, all the captivating and interesting arts, both of composition and pronunciation, enter into the idea of eloquence.

Eloquence may be considered as consisting of three kinds, or degrees. The first, and lowest, is that which aims only to please the hearers. Such, generally, is the eloquence of panegyrics, inaugural orations, addresses to great men, and other harangues of this kind. This ornamental sort of composition is not altogether to be rejected. It may innocently amuse and entertain the mind; and may be connected, at the same time, with very useful sentiments. But it must be acknowledged, that where the speaker has no farther aim than merely to shine and to please, there is great danger of art being strained into ostentation, and of the composition becoming tiresome and insipid.

A second and a higher degree of eloquence is, when the speaker aims not merely to please, but likewise to inform, to instruct, and to convince: when his art is exerted in removing prejudices against himself and his cause; in choosing the most proper arguments, stating them with the greatest force, arranging them in the best order, expressing and delivering them with propriety and beauty; and thereby preparing us to pass that judgment, or embrace that side of the cause, to which he desires to bring us. Within this compass, chiefly, is employed the eloquence of the bar.

But there is a third, and still higher degree of eloquence, in which a greater power is exerted over the human mind, and by which we are not only convinced, but are interested,

Of conviction, what is farther observed; and why must not the orator be satisfied with it alone? Besides solid argument, therefore, what must enter into the idea of eloquence? Of how many degrees does eloquence consist; and what is the first? Of this, what are examples? Why is not this kind of composition to be rejected; but of it, what must be acknowledged? What is the second degree of eloquence? Here, for what purpose is his art exerted; and within this compass what is employed? Of the third degree of eloquence, what is observed; and what is its effect upon us?

agitated, and carried along with the speaker : our passions rise with his ; we enter into all his emotions ; we love, we hate, we resent, according as he inspires us ; and are prompted to resolve, or to act, with vigor and warmth. Debate, in popular assemblies, opens the most extensive field for the exercise of this species of eloquence ; and the pulpit also admits it.

It is necessary here to remark, that this high species of eloquence is always the offspring of passion. By passion we mean that state of the mind in which it is agitated and fired by some object it has in view. A man may convince, and even persuade others to act, by mere reason and argument ; but that degree of eloquence which gains the admiration of mankind, and properly distinguishes one as an orator, is never formed without warmth or passion. Passion, when in such a degree as to rouse and kindle the mind, without throwing it out of the possession of itself, is universally found to exalt all the human powers. It renders the mind infinitely more enlightened, more penetrating, more vigorous and masterly, than it is in its calm moments. A man, actuated by a strong passion, becomes much greater than he is at other times. He is conscious of more strength and force ; he utters greater sentiments, conceives higher designs, and executes them with a boldness and felicity, of which, on other occasions, he could not think himself capable.

The principle, then, being admitted, that all high eloquence flows from passion, several consequences follow, the mention of which will serve to confirm the principle itself. For, hence, the universally acknowledged effect of enthusiasm in public speaking, for affecting their audience. Hence all studied declamation, and labored ornaments of style, which show the mind to be cool and unmoved, are so incompatible with persuasive eloquence. Hence, indeed, every kind of affectation in gesture and pronunciation, detracts, so much, from the merits of a speaker ; and hence, the necessity of being, and being believed to be, disinterested and in earnest, in order to persuade.

These are some of the ideas which have occurred concern-

Where may it be employed ? Of this high species of eloquence, what is it necessary here to remark ; and by it what do we mean ? What may a man do by mere argument ; but what remark follows ? When does passion exalt all the human powers ; and what is its effect upon the mind ? What is observed of a man actuated by a strong passion ? As all high eloquence flows from passion, what consequences follow ?

ing eloquence in general ; and with which we have thought proper to begin, as the foundation of much of what is afterwards to be suggested. From what has already been said, it is evident that eloquence is a high talent, and of great importance in society ; and that it requires both natural genius, and much improvement from art. Viewed as the art of persuasion, it requires, in its lowest state, soundness of understanding, and considerable acquaintance with human nature ; and, in its higher degrees, it requires, moreover, strong sensibility of mind, a lively imagination, joined with correctness of judgment, and an extensive command of the power of language ; to which must also be added, the graces of pronunciation and delivery. We shall now proceed to consider in what state eloquence has subsisted in different ages and nations.

In tracing the origin of eloquence, it is not necessary to go far back into the early ages of the world, or to search for it among the monuments of Eastern or Egyptian antiquity. In those ages, it is true, there was a certain kind of eloquence ; but it was more nearly allied to poetry than to what we properly call oratory. Whilst the intercourse among men was unfrequent, and force and strength were the principal means employed in deciding controversies, the arts of oratory and persuasion, of reasoning and debate, could be little known. The first empires that arose, the Assyrian and Egyptian, were of the despotic kind. A single person, or at most, a few, held the reins of government. The multitude were accustomed to a blind obedience ; they were driven, not persuaded ; and, consequently, none of those refinements of society, which make public speaking an object of importance, were as yet introduced.

It is not till the rise of the Grecian republics, that we perceive any remarkable appearance of eloquence as the art of persuasion ; and these opened to it such a field as it never had before, and, perhaps, has never again, since that time, experienced. Greece was divided into a number of little

From what has already been said of eloquence, what is remarked ; and viewed as the art of persuasion, what does it require ? What shall we now proceed to consider ? In tracing the origin of eloquence, what need we not do ; and of the eloquence of those ages, what is remarked ? When could the arts of persuasion and reasoning be little known ; and of the first empires that arose what is observed ? How is this illustrated ? When does eloquence first appear as the art of persuasion ; and to what extent did it there exist ? How was Greece divided ; how were these at first governed ; and what follows ?

states. These were governed, at first, by kings, who were called tyrants, on whose expulsion from all these states, there sprung up a great number of democratical governments, founded nearly upon the same plan, animated by the same high spirit of freedom, mutually jealous, and rivals of each other.

Of these Grecian republics, the most noted, by far, for eloquence, and, indeed, for arts of every kind, was Athens. The Athenians were an ingenious, quick, sprightly, people; practiced in business, and sharpened by frequent and sudden revolutions, which happened in their government. And, although they had a senate of five hundred, yet, in the general convention of the citizens was placed the last resort; and affairs were conducted there, entirely by reasoning, speaking, and a skillful application to the passions and interests of a popular assembly. There, laws were made, peace and war decreed, and there the magistrates were chosen: for the highest honors of the state were alike open to all; nor was the meanest tradesman excluded from a seat in their supreme courts. In such a state, eloquence, it is obvious, would be much studied, as the surest means of rising to influence and power. It was not, however, that which was brilliant and showy merely; but that which was found upon trial, to be most effectual for convincing, interesting, and persuading the hearers. For there, public speaking was not a mere competition for empty applause, but a serious contention for the public leading, which was the great object both of the men of ambition, and the men of virtue.

Pisistratus, who subverted the government of Solon, was the first who distinguished himself among the Athenians by application to the arts of speech. By his ability in these arts, he raised himself to the sovereign power; which, however, when he had attained it, he exercised with moderation. Of the orators who flourished between his time and the Peloponnesian war, nothing is said in history. Pericles, who died about the beginning of that war, was properly the first who carried eloquence to a great height—to such a

Of these Grecian republics, which was the most noted; and of the Athenians, what is remarked? Of their senate, and of the convention of the citizens, what is observed? Why would eloquence, in such a state be much studied; of what kind was it, and why? Who was the first that distinguished himself by application to the arts of speech; and by his abilities in these arts what did he effect? Of his immediate successors what is observed?

height, indeed, that it does not appear he was ever afterwards surpassed. Besides being a distinguished orator, he was a statesman and a general; expert in business, and of consummate address. Thirty-nine years he governed Athens with absolute sway; and historians ascribe his influence, not more to his political talents than to his eloquence, which was of that forcible and vehement kind, that bore every thing before it, and triumphed over the passions and affections of the people.

The power of eloquence having, after the days of Pericles, become an object of greater consequence than ever, this gave birth to a set of men till then unknown, called rhetoricians, and sometimes sophists, who arose in multitudes during the Peloponnesian war. These sophists joined to their art of rhetoric a subtle logic, and were generally a sort of metaphysical skeptics. They did not content themselves with delivering general instructions concerning eloquence to their pupils, and endeavoring to form their taste; but they professed the art of giving them receipts for making all sorts of orations; and of teaching them how to speak for, and against, every cause whatever. To them the great Socrates opposed himself. By a profound, but simple reasoning, he exploded their sophistry; and endeavored to recall men's attention from that abuse of reasoning and discourse which began to be in vogue, to natural language, and sound and useful thought.

In the same age, though somewhat later than the philosopher above mentioned, flourished Isocrates, whose writings are still extant. He was a professed rhetorician; and by teaching eloquence, he acquired both a great fortune, and higher fame than any of his rivals. His orations are full of morality and good sentiments; they are flowing and smooth, but too destitute of vigor. He never engaged in public affairs, nor pleaded causes; and, consequently, his orations are calculated only for the closet.

We now pass to the great Demosthenes, in whom eloquence shone forth with the highest and most unrivaled splendor.

What is said of Pericles; and how long did he govern Athens? Of what kind was his eloquence? The power of eloquence having become an object of greater consequence than ever, this gave birth to what set of men? Of these sophists, what is farther remarked? Who opposed them; and what did he endeavor to do? In the same age, who flourished; and what is remarked of him? To whom do we now pass; and what is said of his eloquence?

Not formed by nature, either to please or to persuade, he struggled with, and surmounted the most formidable impediments. He shut himself up in a cave, that he might study with less distraction. He declaimed by the sea-shore, that he might be used to the voice of a tumultuous assembly; and with pebbles in his mouth, that he might correct a defect in his speech. He practiced at home with a naked sword hanging over his shoulder, that he might check an ungraceful motion to which he was subject. Hence, the example of this great man affords the highest encouragement to every student of eloquence, since it shows how far art and application could avail, for acquiring an excellence which nature appeared willing to have denied.

Despising the affected and florid manner which the rhetoricians of that age followed, Demosthenes returned to the forcible and manly eloquence of Pericles; and strength and vehemence form the principal characteristics of his style. Never had an orator a finer field than Demosthenes, in his Olynthiacs and Phillippics, which are his capital orations; and doubtless, to the greatness of the subject, and that integrity and public spirit which breathe in them, they owe a large portion of their merit. The subject is, to rouse the indignation of his countrymen against Philip of Macedon, the public enemy of the liberties of Greece; and to guard them against the treacherous measures, by which that crafty tyrant endeavored to lull them into a neglect of their danger. To attain this end, we see him use every means to animate a people, distinguished by justice, humanity, and valor; but in many instances become corrupt and degenerate. He boldly accuses them of venality, indolence, and indifference to the public good; while, at the same time, he reminds them of their former glory, and of their present resources. His contemporary orators, who were bribed by Philip, and who persuaded the people to peace, he openly reproaches as traitors to their country. He not only prompts to vigorous measures, but teaches how they are to be carried into ex-

Not being formed by nature for an orator, what were his efforts that he might become one? Hence, of his example what is remarked; and why? What are the characteristics of his style? What is said of the field that presented itself to Demosthenes; and to this, what is to be attributed? What is the subject; and to attain this end, what course does he pursue? What is said of his contemporary orators; and how does he treat them? Besides prompting to vigorous measures, what does he do?

ecution. His orations are strongly animated, and full of the impetuosity and ardor of public spirit. His composition is not distinguished by ornament and splendor. It is an energy of thought peculiarly his own, which forms his character, and raises him above his species. He seems not to attend to words, but to things. We forget the orator, and think of the subject. He has no parade and ostentation; no studied introductions; but is like a man full of his subject, who, after preparing his audience by a sentence or two, for the reception of plain truths, enters directly on business.

The style of Demosthenes is strong and concise; though sometimes, it must be confessed, harsh and abrupt. His words are highly expressive, and his arrangement firm and manly. Negligent of lesser graces, he seems to have aimed at that sublime which lies in sentiment. His action and pronunciation are said to have been uncommonly vehement and ardent; which, from the manner of his writings, we should readily believe. His character appears to have been of the austere, rather than of the gentle kind. He is always grave, serious, passionate; never degrading himself, nor attempting any thing like pleasantry. If his admirable eloquence be in any respect faulty, it is, that he sometimes borders on the hard and dry. He may be thought to want smoothness and grace; which is attributed to his imitating, too closely, the manner of Thucydides, who was his great model for style, and whose history he is said to have transcribed eight times with his own hand. But these defects are more than atoned for by that masterly force of masculine eloquence, which, as it overpowered all who heard it, cannot, in the present day, be read without emotion.

Of his orations, what is remarked? What is said of his composition; and what is farther remarked of him? Of the style of Demosthenes, and of his words, what is observed? What is remarked of his action, and of his general character? If there be any objection to his admirable eloquence, what is it; and to what may it be attributed? But by what are those defects more than atoned for?

ANALYSIS.

Eloquence.

1. The definition of eloquence.
 - A. Conviction and persuasion.
2. The degrees of eloquence.
 - A. To please only.
 - B. To please and to instruct.
 - C. To interest and to agitate.
 - a. The offspring of passion.

3. The character of eloquence.
4. Its origin.
 - A. Athens.
 - a. Pisistratus.
 - b. Pericles.
 - c. The sophists.
 - d. Isocrates.
 - e. Demosthenes—his style.

LECTURE XXIV.

ROMAN ELOQUENCE—CICERO—MODERN ELOQUENCE.

HAVING treated of the rise of eloquence, and of its state among the Greeks, we now proceed to consider its progress among the Romans, where we shall find one model, at least, in its most splendid and illustrious form. The Romans were long a martial nation, and unskilled in arts of every kind. Arts were not known among them till after the conquest of Greece; and the Romans always acknowledged the Grecians as their masters in every point of learning.

Grecia capta ferum victorum cepit et artes
Intulit agresti Latio.

Horace.

When conquer'd Greece brought in her captive arts,
She triumph'd o'er her savage conquerors' hearts;
Taught our rough verse its numbers to refine,
And our rude style with elegance to shine.

Francis.

As the Romans derived their eloquence, poetry, and learning from the Greeks, so they must be confessed to have been far inferior to them in genius for all these accomplishments. They had neither their vivacity nor sensibility; their passions were not so easily moved, nor their conceptions so lively; in comparison with them, they were a phlegmatic people. Their language resembled their character: it was regular, firm, and stately; but wanted that expressive simplicity, that flexibility to suit every different species of composition, for which the Greek tongue is peculiarly distinguished. And hence, by comparison, we shall always find, that in the Greek productions there is more native genius; in the Roman, more regularity and art.

As the Roman government, during the republic, was of

Having treated of eloquence among the Greeks, among whom do we now proceed to consider its progress; and what shall we there find? Of the Romans, and of the arts among them, what is remarked? What illustration of this remark is given from Horace? As the Romans derived their eloquence and poetry from the Greeks, so, of them, what must be confessed; and how is this illustrated? How did their language compare with that of the Greeks; and hence, by comparison, what shall we always find? As the Roman government, during the republic, was of the popular kind, what followed; but of what kind was it?

the popular kind, public speaking, no doubt, early became the means of acquiring power, honor, and distinction. But in the rude, unpolished times of the state, their speaking could hardly deserve the name of eloquence. It was not till a short time preceding the age of Cicero, that the Roman orators rose into any reputation. Crassus and Antonius seem to have been the most eminent; but as none of their productions are extant, nor any of Hortensius's, who was Cicero's rival at the bar, it is not necessary to transcribe what Cicero has said of them, and of the character of their eloquence.

The object most worthy of our attention is Cicero himself, whose name alone suggests every thing that is splendid in oratory. With his life and character, in other respects, we are not at present concerned. We shall view him only as an eloquent speaker, and endeavor to point out both his virtues and his defects. His virtues are, beyond doubt, superlatively great. In all his orations, his art is conspicuous. He begins, generally, with a regular exordium, and with much address prepossesses the hearers, and studies to gain their affections. His method is clear, and his arguments are arranged with great propriety. In greater clearness of method, he has the advantage over Demosthenes. Every thing appears in its proper place; he never attempts to move till he has endeavored to convince: and in moving, particularly the softer passions, he is highly successful. No man ever knew the force of words better than Cicero. He rolls them along with the greatest beauty and magnificence; and in the structure of his sentences, is eminently curious and exact. He is always full and flowing; never abrupt. He amplifies every thing; yet, though his manner is generally diffuse, it is often happily varied, and accommodated to the subject. When a great public object roused his mind, and demanded indignation and force, he departs, considerably, from that loose and declamatory manner, to which, at other

When did the Roman orators first rise into reputation? Who were the most eminent; but why is it not necessary to transcribe what Cicero has said of them? Who is the object most worthy our attention; and what does his name alone suggest? In what character only, shall we here view him; and what shall we endeavor to do? How does it appear that his virtues are very great; and in what respect has he the advantage over Demosthenes? How is this remark illustrated? Of his knowledge of the force of words, and of his manner in general, what is farther remarked? When does he depart from his usual manner; and in what orations is this the case?

times, he is inclined, and becomes exceedingly cogent and vehement. This is the case in his orations against Anthony and in those against Verres and Catiline.

This great orator, however, is not without his defects. In most of his orations there is too much art; it is even carried to a degree of ostentation. He seems often desirous of commanding admiration, rather than of producing conviction. Hence, on some occasions, he is showy rather than solid; and diffuse, where he ought to have been urgent. His sentences are always round and sonorous; they cannot be accused of monotony, for they possess variety of cadence; but from too great a fondness for magnificence, he is, on some occasions, deficient in strength. Though the services which he had rendered to his country were very great, yet he is too much his own panegyrist. Ancient manners, which imposed fewer restraints on the side of decorum, may, in some degree, excuse, but cannot entirely justify his vanity.

Whether Demosthenes or Cicero be the most perfect orator, is a question on which much has been said by critical writers. The different manner of these two princes of eloquence, and the distinguishing characters of each, are so strongly marked in their writings, that the comparison is, in many respects, obvious and easy. The character of Demosthenes is vigor and austerity; that of Cicero is gentleness and insinuation. In the one you find more manliness; in the other, more ornament. The one is more harsh, but more spirited and cogent; the other more agreeable, but withal looser and weaker.

In comparing these two great orators, Fenelon, the celebrated Archbishop of Cambray, and author of *Telemachus*, seems to have stated their relative merits with great justice and perspicuity. His judgment is given in his *Reflections on Rhetoric and Poetry*. The following is a translation of the passage: 'I do not hesitate to declare,' says he, 'that I think Demosthenes superior to Cicero. I am persuaded no one can admire Cicero more than I do. He adorns what-

What, however, are this great orator's defects; and hence, what follows? What is remarked of his sentences; and of the services which he rendered to his country, what is observed? What may, in some degree, excuse his vanity? On what question has much been said by critical writers; and why is the comparison, in many respects, easy? What is the comparison between them? What is remarked of Fenelon's comparison of them? Where is his judgment given; and what is the translation of the passage?

ever he attempts. He does honor to language. He disposes of words in a manner peculiar to himself. His style has great variety of character. Whenever he pleases, he is even concise and vehement; for instance, against Catiline, against Verres, against Anthony. But ornament is too visible in his writings. His art is wonderful, but it is perceived. When the orator is providing for the safety of the Republic, he forgets not himself, nor permits others to forget him. Demosthenes seems to escape from himself, and to see nothing but his country. He seeks not elegance of expression; unsought for, he possesses it. He is superior to admiration. He makes use of language as a modest man does of dress, only to cover him. He thunders, he lightens. He is a torrent which carries every thing before it. We cannot criticise, because we are not ourselves. His subject enchains our attention, and makes us forget his language. We lose him from our sight: Philip alone occupies our minds. I am delighted with both these orators; but I confess that I am less affected by the infinite art and magnificent eloquence of Cicero, than by the rapid simplicity of Demosthenes.'

The reign of eloquence, among the Romans, was very short. After the age of Cicero, it expired; and we have no reason to wonder that this was the case. For not only was liberty entirely extinguished, but arbitrary power was felt in its heaviest and most oppressive weight; Providence having, in his wrath, delivered over the Roman empire to a succession of the most execrable tyrants that ever disgraced and scourged the human race. Under their government it was naturally to be expected that taste would be corrupted, and genius discouraged. Some of the ornamental arts, less intimately connected with liberty, continued, for a while, to prevail; but for that masculine eloquence, which had exercised itself in the senate, and in the public affairs, there was no longer any place. Luxury, effeminacy, and flattery, overwhelmed all. And the forum, where so many great affairs had been transacted, was now become a desert.

In the decline of the Roman empire, the introduction of

Of the reign of eloquence among the Romans, what is remarked; and why have we no reason to wonder that this was the case? Under their government, what was naturally to be expected? Of some of the arts what is remarked; but for what was there no longer any place? What overwhelmed all; and what was the forum now become? What, in the decline of the Roman empire, introduced a new species of eloquence; but of them what is remarked?

Christianity gave rise to a new species of eloquence, in the apologies, sermons, and pastoral writings of the Fathers of the church. But none of them afford very just models of eloquence. Their language, as soon as we descend to the third or fourth century, becomes harsh; and they are, in general, infected with the taste of that age—a love of swoln and strained thoughts, and of the play of words. Among the Greek Fathers, the most distinguished, by far, for his oratorical merit, is St. Chrysostom. His language is pure; his style highly figured. He is copious, smooth, and sometimes highly pathetic. But he retains, at the same time, much of that character which has been always attributed to the Asiatic eloquence—diffuse and redundant to a great degree, and often overwrought and tumid.

As nothing occurs that deserves attention in the middle ages, we pass now to the state of eloquence in modern times. Here it must be acknowledged, that in no European nation, has public speaking been considered so great an object, or been cultivated with so much care, as in Greece or Rome. Its reputation has never been so high; its effects have never been so considerable; nor has that high and sublime kind of it, which prevailed in those ancient states, been so much as aimed at; notwithstanding, too, that a new profession has been established, which gives peculiar advantages to oratory, and affords it the noblest field—we mean the church. The genius of the world seems, in this respect, to have undergone some alteration. The two countries where we might expect to find most of the spirit of eloquence are, France and Great Britain: France, on account of the distinguished turn of the nation towards all the liberal arts, and of the encouragement which, for more than a century past, these arts have received from the public: Great Britain, on account of its free government, and the liberal spirit and genius of its people. Yet in neither of these countries has the talent of public speaking risen near to the degree of its ancient splendor; while in other productions of genius, both in prose and in poetry, they have contended for the prize with Greece and

What is observed of their language; and with what are they, in general, infected? Among the Greek fathers, who is the most distinguished; and what is remarked of him? What is observed of the eloquence of the middle ages, and of that of modern times? In what two countries might we expect to find most of the spirit of eloquence; and why? How do these countries compare with Greece and Rome in eloquence; and, also, in other productions of genius?

Rome; nay, in some compositions, they may be thought to have surpassed them.

It seems particularly surprising, that Great Britain should not have made a more conspicuous figure in eloquence than it has hitherto attained; when we consider the enlightened, and, at the same time, the free and bold genius of the country, which seems not a little to favor oratory; and when we consider that, of all the polite nations of Europe, it alone possesses a popular government, or admits into the legislature, such numerous assemblies as can be supposed to lie under the dominion of eloquence. Notwithstanding this advantage, it must be confessed, that in most parts of eloquence, we are undoubtedly inferior, not only to the Greeks and Romans by many degrees, but also, in some respects, to the French. We have philosophers, eminent and conspicuous, perhaps, beyond any nation, in every branch of science. We have both taste and erudition, in a high degree. We have historians, we have poets of the greatest name; but of orators, or public speakers, we have little to boast; and no monuments of their genius are to be found.*

The characteristical difference between the state of eloquence in France and Great Britain is, that the French have adopted higher ideas both of pleasing and persuading by means of oratory, than we have; though, sometimes, in the execution, they fail. In Great Britain, we have taken up eloquence on a lower key; but in our execution, as was naturally to be expected, have been more correct. In France, the style of their orators is ornamented with bolder figures; and their discourse carried on with more amplification, warmth, and elevation. The composition is often very beautiful; but sometimes, also, too diffuse, and deficient in that strength and cogency which gives to eloquence all its power.

* Perhaps, Burke, Sheridan, Fox, and Pitt, form exceptions to this remark.

Why does it seem surprising that Great Britain has not made a more conspicuous figure in eloquence, than it hitherto has? Notwithstanding this advantage, what must be confessed? What do we possess; but of our orators what is remarked? Who form exceptions to this last remark? What is the characteristical difference between the state of eloquence in France and in Great Britain? What is remarked of the state of their orations in France; and, also, of their composition?

Several reasons may be given, why modern eloquence has been so confined and humble in its efforts. In the first place, it seems, that this change must, in part, be ascribed to accurate turn of thinking, which has been so much studied in modern times. Our public speakers are obliged to be more reserved than the ancients, in their endeavors to elevate the imagination and warm the passions; and, by the influence of prevailing taste, their own genius is, perhaps, in too great a degree, rendered chaste and delicate. It is probable, also, that we ascribe to our correctness and good sense, what is chiefly owing to the phlegm and natural coldness of our dispositions. For the vivacity and sensibility of the Greeks and Romans, more particularly of the former, seem to have been much superior to ours, and to have communicated to them a higher relish for all the beauties of oratory.

Besides these national considerations, we must, in the next place, attend to peculiar circumstances in the three great scenes of public speaking, which have proved disadvantageous to the growth of eloquence among us. Though the parliament of Great Britain be the noblest field that Europe, at the present day, affords to a public speaker, yet eloquence has never been so powerful an instrument there, as it was in the popular assemblies of Greece and Rome. Under some former reigns, the iron hand of arbitrary power checked its efforts; and in later times, ministerial influence has generally rendered it of small importance. The power of speaking, though always considerable, yet has been often found too feeble to counterbalance either of these; and, of course, has not been studied with so much zeal and fervor, as where its effect on business was irresistible and certain.

At the bar, our disadvantage, in comparison with the ancients, is great. Among them, the judges were commonly numerous; the laws were few and simple; the decision of causes was left, in a great measure, to equity, and a sense of mankind. Hence the field for judicial eloquence was large

What is the first reason given, why modern eloquence has been so confined and humble in its efforts; and how is this illustrated? What is also probable; and why? Besides these national considerations, to what must we, in the next place, attend; and of the parliament of Great Britain, what is observed? What, under some former reigns, checked its efforts; and in later times, what has rendered it of small importance? Of the power of speaking what is remarked; and, of course, what has followed? What are our disadvantages at the bar; and hence what followed?

and ample. But at present, the system of law is become much more complicated. The knowledge of it is rendered so laborious an attainment, as to constitute the business of a man's life. The art of speaking is but a secondary accomplishment, to which he can afford to devote much less of his time and labor. The bounds of eloquence, besides, are now much circumscribed at the bar; and, except in a few cases, reduced to arguing, from strict law, statute, or precedent, by which means knowledge, much more than oratory, is become the principal requisite.

With regard to the pulpit, it has certainly been a great disadvantage, that the practice of reading sermons, instead of repeating them from memory, has, with us, so generally prevailed. This may, indeed, have introduced accuracy; but it has done great prejudice to eloquence; for a discourse read, is far inferior to an oration spoken. It leads to a different sort of composition, as well as of delivery; and can never have an equal effect upon an audience. Another circumstance, too, has been unfortunate. The sectaries and fanatics, before the Restoration, adopted a warm, zealous, and popular manner of preaching; and their adherents afterwards continued to distinguish themselves by a similar ardor. A hatred of these sects, drove the established church into the opposite extreme, of a studied coolness of expression. Hence, from the art of persuasion, which preaching ought always to be, it has passed, with us, into mere reasoning and instruction.

What is the case at present; and how is the art of speaking regarded? What farther remarks follow? With regard to the pulpit, what has been the effect of the practice of reading sermons? What other circumstance, too, has been unfortunate; and hence what followed?

ANALYSIS.

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| <p>1. Roman eloquence.</p> <p>A. Its origin.</p> <p>B. Cicero.</p> <p>a. His excellences.</p> <p>b. His defects.</p> <p>c. Compared with Demosthenes.</p> <p>C. Eloquence among the Romans of short continuance.</p> | <p>D. Eloquence of the church.</p> <p>2. Modern eloquence.</p> <p>A. Of France.</p> <p>B. Of Great Britain.</p> <p>C. Why modern eloquence is limited.</p> <p>a. The bar.</p> <p>b. The pulpit.</p> |
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LECTURE XXV.

DIFFERENT KINDS OF PUBLIC SPEAKING— ELOQUENCE OF POPULAR ASSEMBLIES.

AFTER the preliminary views which have been given of the nature of eloquence in general, and of the state in which it has subsisted in different ages and countries, we are now to enter on the different kinds of public speaking, the distinguishing characters of each, and the rules that relate to them. The ancients divided all orations into three kinds; the demonstrative, the deliberative, and the judicial. The scope of the demonstrative was to praise or to blame; that of the deliberative, to advise or to dissuade; that of the judicial, to accuse or to defend. The principal subjects of demonstrative eloquence, were panegyrics, invectives, gratulatory and funeral orations. The deliberative was employed in matters of public concern, agitated in the senate, or before the assemblies of the people. The judicial is the same as the eloquence of the bar, employed in addressing judges, who have power to absolve or to condemn. Though this division is judicious, and has been followed by some of the moderns, yet, it will suit our purpose better, to follow that division which the train of modern speaking naturally points out to us, taken from the three great scenes of eloquence, popular assemblies, the bar, and the pulpit; each of which has a distinct character.

To all the three, pulpit, bar, and popular assemblies, belong, in common, the rules concerning the conduct of a discourse in all its parts. Of these rules we shall afterwards treat at large. But before we proceed to them, it seems necessary to show what is peculiar to each of these three kinds of oratory, in their spirit, character, or manner. For

After these preliminary views, upon what are we to enter? Into what three kinds did the ancients divide all orations; and what was the scope of each? On what subjects were they respectively employed? Of this division, what is remarked; but what will suit our purpose better? To the pulpit, bar, and popular assemblies, what, equally, belong; and what is observed of them? But before we proceed to them, what seems necessary; and why?

every species of public speaking has a manner or character peculiarly suited to itself; of which it is highly material to have a just idea, in order to direct the application of general rules.

Without inquiring which of these three kinds of public speaking before mentioned, has the preference, in point of rank, we shall begin with the eloquence of popular assemblies; as it tends to throw most light upon the rest. The most august theatre for this kind of eloquence, to be found in any nation of Europe, is, beyond doubt, the parliament of Great Britain. In meetings, too, of less dignity, it may display itself. Wherever there is a popular court, or wherever any number of men are assembled for debate or consultation, there, this species of eloquence may be applied. Its object is, or ought always to be, persuasion. There must be some end proposed—some point, most commonly of public utility or good, in favor of which we seek to determine our hearers. Now, in all attempts to persuade men, we must proceed upon the principle, that it is necessary to convince their understanding. Nothing can be more erroneous than to imagine, that because speeches to popular assemblies admit more of a declamatory style than some other discourses, they, therefore, stand less in need of being supported by sound reasoning. When modelled upon this false idea, they may have the show, but can never produce the effect of real eloquence. Even the show of eloquence which they make, will please only the trifling and superficial; for with all tolerable judges, mere declamation soon becomes insipid.

It must ever be remembered, that the foundation of all that can be called eloquence, is good sense, and solid thought. As popular as the orations of Demosthenes were, spoken to all the citizens of Athens, every one who reads them must be sensible how fraught they are with argument; and how important it appeared to him to convince the understanding, in order to persuade, or to work on the principles of action. Hence their influence in his own time; and

With which shall we begin; and why? At present, where is the most august theatre for this kind of eloquence to be found; and where else may it display itself? How is this last remark illustrated? What is its object; and what remarks follow? What is an erroneous idea; and when modelled upon this, what is observed of them? Whom only will the show of eloquence which they make please; and why? What is the foundation of all that can be called eloquence; and from Demosthenes, how is this illustrated?

hence their fame in ours. Let it be the first study, therefore, of him who means to address a popular assembly, to be previously master of the business on which he means to speak; to be well provided with matter and argument; and to rest upon these the chief stress. This will always give to his discourse an air of manliness and strength, which is a powerful instrument of persuasion. Ornament, if there be a genius for it, will follow of course; and, at any rate, it demands only their secondary study. 'To your expression be attentive; but about your matter be solicitous,' is an advice of Quintilian, which cannot be too often recollected by all who study oratory.

In the next place, in order to be persuasive speakers in a popular assembly, it is a capital rule, that we, ourselves, be persuaded of what we recommend to others. Never, when it can be avoided, should we espouse any side of the argument, but what we believe to be the just one. Seldom or never will a man be eloquent, but when he is in earnest, and uttering his own sentiments. As was before observed, all high eloquence must be the offspring of passion, or warm emotion. This makes every man persuasive, and gives a force to his genius, which it cannot otherwise possess.

Young people, with a view of training themselves to the art of speaking, imagine it useful to adopt that side of the question under debate, which, to themselves, appears the weakest, and to try what figure they can make of it. But this is by no means the most improving education for public speaking; as it tends to form them to a habit of flimsy and trivial discourse. Such a liberty they should at no time allow themselves, unless in meetings where no real business is carried on, but where declamation or improvement in speaking, is the sole aim. Nor even in such meetings is it to be recommended as the most useful exercise. They will improve themselves to more advantage, and acquit themselves with more honor, by choosing, always, that side of

What, therefore, should be the first study of him who wishes to address a popular assembly; and what will this give to his discourse? Of ornament what is remarked; what says Quintilian; and what is observed of it? In the next place, to be persuasive speakers in a popular assembly, what is a capital rule? What should we never do; and why? What was before observed; and what is remarked of it? What do young people imagine to be useful; of this what is observed; and why? When, only, should they allow themselves such a liberty; and even in such meetings what will be a more useful exercise?

the debate, to which, in their own judgment, they are most inclined, and supporting it by what seems to themselves most solid and persuasive. They will acquire the habit of reasoning closely, and expressing themselves with warmth and force, much more when they are adhering to their own sentiments, than when they are speaking in opposition to them.

Debate in popular assemblies, seldom allows the speaker that previous preparation, which the pulpit always, and the bar sometimes, admits. The argument must be suited to the course which the debate takes; and as no man can exactly foresee this, one who trusts to a set speech, previously composed, will, on many occasions, be thrown out of the ground which he had taken, or find it preoccupied by others. There is, indeed, a general prejudice against all kinds of set speeches, in public meetings. At the opening of a debate, they may, perhaps, sometimes be introduced with propriety; but as the debate advances, they become improper: they want the appearance of being suggested by the business about which the speakers are engaged. Study and ostentation are apt to be too conspicuous; and, consequently, though admired as elegant, they are seldom so persuasive as more free and unconstrained discourses.

This, however, by no means prohibits a premeditation of what we are to say; but the premeditation which is of most advantage, is of the subject or argument in general, rather than of elegant composition in any particular branch of it. With regard to the matter, we cannot be too accurate in our preparation; but with regard to words and expression, it is very possible to be so assiduous, as to render our speech stiff and precise. Till speakers acquire that firmness, that presence of mind, and that command of expression, in a public meeting, which nothing but habit and practice can bestow, it may be proper for them to commit to memory the whole of what they are to say; but after some performances of this

Why is this the case? What does debate in popular assemblies seldom allow the speaker; and why? Against what is there a general prejudice? When may they be introduced with propriety; when do they become improper; and why? What are apt to be too conspicuous; and what consequence follows? What, however, does not this prohibit; but what premeditation is of most advantage? With regard to the matter and to the words, what remarks follow? Till when should speakers commit the whole of what they are to say; but after some performances of this kind shall have given them boldness, what will they find the better method?

kind shall have given them boldness, they will find it the better method not to confine themselves so strictly, but only to set down some short notes of the topics, or principal thoughts upon which they are to insist, leaving the words to be suggested by the warmth of discourse. Such short notes of the substance of the discourse, will be found of considerable service, to those, especially, who are beginning to speak in public. They will accustom them to a degree of accuracy, which if they speak frequently, they are in danger of soon losing. They will even accustom them to a distinct arrangement, without which eloquence, however great, cannot produce entire conviction.

This leads us next to observe, that in all kinds of public speaking, no discourse of any length, should be without method—that is, every thing should be found in its proper place. Every one who speaks, will find it of the greatest advantage to have previously arranged his thoughts, and classed under proper heads, in his own mind, what he is to deliver. This will assist his memory, and carry him through his discourse without that confusion to which one is every moment subject, who has fixed no distinct plan of what he is to say. And with respect to the hearers, order in discourse is absolutely necessary for making any proper impression. It adds both force and light to what is said. It enables them to accompany the speaker easily and readily, as he goes along, and makes them feel the full effect of every argument which he employs.

We shall now consider the style and expression suited to the eloquence of popular assemblies; and that these give scope to the most animated manner of public speaking, there can be no doubt. The very aspect of a large assembly, engaged in some debate of importance, and attentive to the discourse of one man, is sufficient to inspire that man with such elevation and warmth, as not only give rise to strong impressions, but gives them propriety also. Passion is easily excited in a great assembly, where the movements are communicated by mutual sympathy between the orator

Of what service will such short notes be? What does this lead us next to observe? What will every one who speaks find of great advantage; and why? What advantages do the hearers derive from order in discourse? What shall we now consider; and of what can there be no doubt? What is the effect of the aspect of a large assembly, engaged in some debate of importance; and why?

and the audience. That ardor of speech, that vehemence and glow of sentiment, which proceed from a mind animated and inspired by some great and public object, constitute the peculiar character of popular eloquence, in its highest degree of perfection. We must remember, however, that the liberty of indulging in a strong and passionate manner, in this kind of oratory, must be kept within certain limits; and these we shall point out, in order to guard against mistakes on this subject.

In the first place, the warmth which we express, must be suited to the occasion and the subject; for nothing can be more preposterous, than an attempt to introduce great vehemence into a subject, which is either of slight importance, or which, by its nature, requires to be treated of calmly. A temperate tone of speech, is that for which there is most frequent occasion; and he who is always passionate and vehement, will be considered as a blusterer, and meet with little regard.

In the second place, we must be careful never to counterfeit warmth without feeling it. This always betrays persons into an unnatural manner, which exposes them to ridicule; for, as has been often suggested, to support the appearance, without the real feeling of passion, is one of the most difficult things in nature. The great rule here, as, indeed, in every other case, is, never to attempt a strain of eloquence which is not seconded by our own genius. A speaker may acquire both reputation and influence, by a calm, argumentative manner; but to reach the pathetic and the sublime of oratory, requires those strong sensibilities of mind, and that high power of expression, which are the lot of a very small portion of mankind.

In the third place, even when the subject justifies the vehement manner, and when genius prompts it—when warmth is felt, not feigned; we must, however, be cautious, lest impetuosity carry us beyond the bounds of prudence and propriety. If the speaker lose the command of himself,

What constitute the peculiar character of popular eloquence, in its highest perfection; but what must we, at the same time, remember? In the first place, to what must the warmth be suited; and why? For what tone of speech is there most frequent occasion; and what follows? In the second place, about what must we be careful; and why? Here, what is the great rule? What may a speaker, by a calm, argumentative manner, acquire; but to reach the pathetic and the sublime of oratory, what is requisite? In the third place, of what must we be cautious; and why?

he will soon cease to influence his hearers. He should begin with moderation, and endeavor to warm his audience gradually and equally with himself; for if their passions be not in unison with his, the discord will soon be disagreeable and offensive. Respect for his hearers should always lay a decent restraint upon his warmth, and prevent it from carrying him beyond proper limits. When this is the case—when a speaker is so far master of himself as to preserve close attention to argument, and even to some degree of accurate expression, this self-command, this effort of reason, in the midst of passion, contributes, in the highest degree, both to please and to persuade. It is indeed, the highest attainment of eloquence; uniting the strength of reason with the vehemence of passion; affording all the advantages of passion for the purpose of persuasion, without the confusion and disorder which are its usual attendants.

In the fourth place, in the highest and most animated strain of popular speaking, we must always preserve a due regard to what the public ear will bear. Without an attention to this, an injudicious imitation of ancient orators might betray a speaker into a boldness of manner, with which the coolness of modern taste would be dissatisfied and displeased. This may, perhaps, as was before observed, be a disadvantage to modern eloquence. It is no reason why we should be too severe in checking the impulse of genius, and continuing always creeping on the ground; but it is a reason, however, why we should avoid carrying the tone of declamation to a height that would now be considered extravagant.

In the fifth place, in all kinds of public speaking, but especially in popular assemblies, we must particularly attend to all the decorums of time, place, and character. No ardor of eloquence can atone for these. That vehemence which is becoming in a person of character and authority, may be unsuitable to the modesty expected from a young speaker. That sportive and witty manner which may suit one subject and one assembly, is altogether out of place in a

In what manner should he begin; how should he proceed; and why? What effect should respect for his hearers always produce; and of this, what remarks follow? In the fourth place, what must we always preserve; and what will be the consequence of neglecting this? To what may this be a disadvantage; for what is it no reason; but for what is it a reason? In the fifth place, to what must we attend; and how is this fully illustrated?

grave cause, and a solemn meeting. No one should ever rise to speak in public, without forming to himself a just and strict idea of what suits his own age and character; what is suitable to the subject, the hearers, the place, and the occasion. On this idea he should adjust the whole train and manner of his elocution.

With regard to the degree of conciseness or diffuseness suited to popular eloquence, it is not easy to determine with precision. A diffuse manner is generally considered as the most proper. It seems, however, that there is danger of erring in this respect; and that by too diffuse a style, public speakers often lose more in point of strength, than they gain by the fullness of their illustration. Excessive conciseness, indeed, must be cautiously avoided. We must explain and inculcate; but confine ourselves within certain limits. We should never forget, that however much we may be delighted with hearing ourselves speak, every audience is apt to tire; and the moment they grow weary, our eloquence becomes useless. A loose and verbose manner never fails to create disgust; and, on most occasions, it is better to run the risk of saying too little than too much. It is better to place our thought in one strong point of view, and rest it there, than by presenting it in every light, and pouring forth a profusion of words upon it, exhaust the attention of our hearers, and leave them languid and fatigued.

What should every one do before he rises to speak in public; and what remark follows? With regard to the degree of conciseness or diffuseness suited to popular eloquence, what is remarked; and which is generally preferred? What is the effect of too diffuse a style; and what is remarked of excessive conciseness? What should we never forget? What is said of a loose and verbose manner; and what remarks follow?

ANALYSIS.

Different kinds of public speaking.

1. Eloquence of popular assemblies.

A. The foundation of all eloquence.

- a. The first requisite for popular speaking.
- b. The second requisite.
- c. The practice, of young speakers.

B. Debate in popular assemblies.

- a. The necessity of premeditation.

- b. Method always to be observed.

C. The style of popular eloquence.

- a. The warmth suited to the subject.
- b. Never to be counterfeited.
- c. Not to be carried too far.
- d. The public ear to be regarded.
- e. Decorums to be observed.
- f. Conciseness and diffuseness considered.

LECTURE XXVI.

ELOQUENCE OF THE BAR.

THE next great scene of public speaking to which we proceed is the eloquence of the bar ; and as much of what was said in the last lecture is applicable here, also, our observations upon this subject will be the less extensive. All, however, that has been said, must not be applied to it ; and it is necessary, therefore, that the distinction should be clearly perceived.

In the first place, the ends of speaking at the bar, and in popular assemblies, are commonly different. In popular assemblies, the great object is persuasion : the orator aims at determining the hearers to some choice or conduct, as good, fit, or useful. For accomplishing this end, he necessarily applies himself to every principle of action in our nature—to the passions and to the heart, as well as to the understanding. But at the bar, conviction is the great object. There, it is not the speaker's business to persuade the judges to what is good or useful, but to show them what is just and true ; and consequently, it is chiefly, or solely, to the understanding that his eloquence is addressed.

In the next place, speakers at the bar address themselves to one, or to a few judges, who are, generally, persons of age, gravity, and dignity of character. There, they have not those advantages which a mixed and numerous assembly affords for employing all the arts of speech, even supposing their subject to admit them. Passion does not rise so easily ; the speaker is heard more coolly ; he is watched with more severity ; and would expose himself to ridicule, by attempting that high vehement tone, which is only proper in speaking to a multitude.

In the last place, the nature and management of the sub-

What is the next great scene of public speaking ; and why will our observations on it not be extensive ? As all, however, that has been said must not be applied to it, what follows ? What is the first distinction ; and how is it fully illustrated ? What is the second distinction ? There, what advantages do they not possess ; and why ? What is the last distinction mentioned ; and in popular assemblies, what advantages has the speaker ?

jects which belong to the bar, require a very different species of oratory from that of popular assemblies. In the latter, the speaker has a much wider range. He is seldom confined to any precise rule; he can fetch his topics from a great variety of quarters, and employ every illustration which his fancy or imagination suggests. But at the bar, the field of speaking is limited to precise law and statute. Imagination is not allowed to take its scope. The advocate sees before him the line, the square, and the compass. These, it is his principal business to be continually applying to the subjects under debate.

For these reasons, it is evident, that the eloquence of the bar is of a much more limited, more sober and chastened kind, than that of popular assemblies; and for similar reasons, we must beware of considering even the judicial orations of Cicero, or Demosthenes, as exact models of the manner of speaking which is adapted to the present state of the bar. It is particularly necessary to remind young lawyers of this; because, though these were pleadings spoken in civil or criminal causes, yet, the nature of the bar, anciently, both in Greece and Rome, allowed a much nearer approach to popular eloquence than it now does.

This is to be ascribed principally to two causes: first, because in the ancient judicial orations, strict law was much less an object of attention than it is with us. In the days of Demosthenes and Cicero, the municipal statutes were few, simple, and general; and the decision of causes was left, in a great measure, to the equity and common sense of the judges. Eloquence, much more than jurisprudence, was the study of those who were to plead causes. Cicero informs us, that three months study was sufficient to make any man a complete civilian; nay, it was even thought that one might be a good pleader at the bar, without any previous application. Among the Romans there was a set of men called *Pragmatici*, whose office it was to supply the orator with all the law knowledge his case required, and which he put into that popular form, and ornamented with those colors

But at the bar, as the field of speaking is limited to precise law and statute, what follows? For these reasons, what is evident; and for similar reasons, of what must we beware? Why is it particularly necessary to remind young lawyers of this? What is the first cause to which this is to be ascribed; and how is this illustrated? What does Cicero inform us; and what was even thought to be true? Among the Romans, what set of men was there; and what was their office?

of eloquence, which were most fitted for influencing the judges before whom he spoke.

We may next observe, that the civil and criminal judges, both in Greece and Rome, were commonly much more numerous than they are with us, and formed a sort of popular assembly. The celebrated tribunal of the Areopagus, at Athens, consisted of fifty judges at the least. Some make it consist of a great number more. When Socrates was condemned, by what court it is uncertain, we are informed that no fewer than two hundred and eighty voted against him. In Rome, the *Judices Selecti*, as they were called, were always numerous, and had the office and power of both judge and jury. In the famous cause of Milo, Cicero spoke to fifty-one *Judices Selecti*, and thus had the advantage of addressing his whole pleading, not to one, or to a few learned judges of the point of law, as is the case at present, but to an assembly of Roman citizens. Hence all those arts of popular eloquence which he employed with so much success. Hence tears and commiseration are so often made use of as the means of gaining a cause. Hence, too, certain practices, which would be reckoned theatrical by us, were common at the Roman bar; such as introducing not only the accused person, dressed in deep mourning, but presenting to the judges his family, and his young children, endeavoring to move them by their cries and tears.

Thus we see, that on account of the wide difference between the ancient and modern state of the bar, and also, the difference in the turn of ancient and modern eloquence, too strict an imitation of Cicero's manner of pleading, would now be extremely injudicious. To great advantage, however, he may still be studied by every speaker at the bar. In the address with which he opens his subject, and the insinuation he employs for gaining the favor of the judges—in the distinct arrangements of his facts—in the gracefulness of his narration—in the conduct and exposition of his arguments, he may, and he ought to be imitated.

Before we enter upon more particular directions concern-

What may we next observe; and what illustrations of this remark follow? In the famous cause of Milo, to how many judges did Cicero speak; what advantage did he thus possess; and hence what follows? Hence, too, what practices were common; and what examples are given? Thus what do we see; and why? Why, however, may he still be studied, by every speaker at the bar, to great advantage? Before we enter upon more particular directions concerning the eloquence of the bar, what must we observe; and why?

ing the eloquence of the bar, we must observe, that the foundation of a lawyer's reputation and success, must always be laid in a profound knowledge of his profession. Whatever his abilities as a speaker may be, if his knowledge of the law be considered superficial, few will choose to commit their cause to him. Besides previous study, and a proper stock of knowledge attained, another thing inseparable from the success of every pleader is, a diligent and painful attention to every cause with which he is entrusted, so as to be thoroughly master of all the facts and circumstances relating to it. On this, the ancient rhetoricians insist with great earnestness, and justly represent it as a necessary basis to all the eloquence that can be exerted in pleading. Cicero tells us that he was in the habit of conversing fully with every client that came to consult him—that he was careful that no one should hear their conversation, in order that his client might explain himself more freely—that he was accustomed to start every objection, and to plead the cause of the adverse party with him, that he might come at the whole truth, and be fully prepared on every point of the business; and that, after the client had retired, he used to balance all the facts with himself, under three different characters—his own, that of the judge, and that of the advocate on the opposite side. Quintilian, amongst many other excellent rules on the same subject, observes that, 'to listen to something which is superfluous can do no hurt; whereas to be ignorant of something that is material, may be highly prejudicial. The advocate will frequently discover the weak side of a cause, and learn, at the same time, what is the proper defence, from circumstances which, to the party himself, appeared to be of little or no moment.'

Supposing an advocate to be thus prepared, with all the knowledge which the study of the law in general, and of the cause which he is to plead in particular, can furnish him, it must next be observed, that eloquence in pleading is of the highest moment for giving support to a cause. It would be altogether wrong to infer, that because the ancient popular

Besides previous study, what else is requisite for success; and for what reason? In what estimation did the ancient rhetoricians hold this; and how did they represent it? On this subject what does Cicero tell us was the course he was accustomed to pursue; and with what view? What does Quintilian, amongst many other excellent rules, observe? Supposing an advocate to be thus prepared with all requisite knowledge, what must next be observed? What inference would be a wrong one?

and vehement manner is now, in a great measure, superseded, there is, therefore, no room for eloquence at the bar, and that the study of it has become superfluous. There is, perhaps, no scene of public speaking where eloquence is more necessary. On other occasions, the subject on which men speak in public is frequently sufficient, by itself, to interest the hearers; but the dryness and subtlety of the subjects generally agitated at the bar, require more than any other, a certain kind of eloquence, in order to command attention; in order to give proper weight to the arguments that are employed, and to prevent any thing which the pleader advances from passing unregarded. The effect of good speaking is always very great. There is as much difference in the impression made upon the hearers, by a cold, dry, and confused speaker, and that made by one who pleads the same cause with elegance, ardor, and strength, as there is between our conception of an object, when it is presented to us in the glimmering of twilight, and when viewed in the wide effulgence of a summer's noon.

It is no small encouragement to eloquence at the bar, that of all the liberal professions, none gives fairer play to genius and abilities than that of the advocate. He is less exposed than some others to suffer by the arts of rivalry, by popular prejudices, or secret intrigues. He is sure of coming forward according to his merits; for he stands forth every day to view; he boldly enters the list with his competitors; every appearance which he makes, is an appeal to the public, whose decision seldom fails to be just, because it is impartial. Interest and friends may, at the beginning, give a young pleader peculiar advantages, but they can do no more than open the field to him. A reputation resting on these assistances will soon fall. Spectators remark, judges decide, parties watch; and to him will the multitude of clients never fail to resort, who gives the most approved specimens of his knowledge, eloquence, and industry.

In the species of eloquence peculiar to the bar, purity and neatness of expression are chiefly to be studied—a style per-

Why is eloquence here particularly necessary? What illustration of the effect of good speaking follows? What is no small encouragement to eloquence at the bar; and why? Why is he sure of coming forward according to his merit? What may interest and friends, at the beginning do; and why will a reputation resting on these soon fall? In the species of eloquence peculiar to the bar, what are chiefly to be studied; and what is it?

spicuous and proper, not needlessly overcharged with the pedantry of law terms, nor affectedly avoiding these, when they are suitable and requisite. Verbosity is a fault of which men of this profession are frequently accused; and into which the habit of speaking and writing so hastily, and with so little preparation as they are often obliged to do, almost unavoidably betrays them. It cannot, therefore, be too earnestly recommended to those who are beginning to practice at the bar, that they should early endeavor to guard against this whilst they have full leisure for preparation. Let them form themselves to the habit of a strong and correct style, which expresses the same thing much better, in a few words, than is done by the accumulation of intricate and endless periods. If this habit be once acquired, it will become natural to them afterwards, when compelled by a multiplicity of business to compose with more precipitation. Whereas, if a loose and negligent style has been suffered to become familiar, they will not be able, even upon occasions when they wish to make an unusual effort, to express themselves with force and elegance.

Distinctness, in speaking at the bar, is peculiarly necessary. This should be shown chiefly in two things; first, in stating the question—in showing what is the point in debate—what we admit—what we deny; and where the line of division begins between us and the adverse party. Next, it should be shown in the order and arrangement of all the parts of the pleading. A clear method is of the highest consequence in every species of oration; but in those intricacies that belong to the bar, it becomes infinitely essential. Too much pains, therefore, cannot be taken, in previously studying the plan and method. If there be indistinctness and disorder there, we can have no success in convincing; and, consequently, we leave the whole cause in darkness.

With respect to the narration of facts, it should always be

With what fault are men of this profession often charged; and how are they often betrayed into it? What is, therefore, earnestly recommended; and to what should they form themselves? If this habit be once acquired, what will follow; but if a negligent style has been suffered to become familiar, what will be the consequence? In speaking at the bar, what is peculiarly necessary; and how should it be shown? Where should it next be shown; and why is it peculiarly necessary here? Why cannot, therefore, too much pains be taken in previously studying the plan and method? With respect to the narration of facts, what is remarked; and why?

as concise as the nature of them will admit. It is always necessary that they should be remembered; and, consequently, tediousness in relating them, and an unnecessary minuteness, clogs and overloads the memory. Whereas, if a pleader omit all superfluous circumstances in his recital, he adds strength to the material facts; he gives a clearer view of what he relates, and makes the impression of it more lasting. In argumentation, however, a more diffuse manner seems requisite at the bar, than on some other occasions. For, in popular assemblies, where the subject of debate is commonly plain and obvious, arguments gain strength by their conciseness. But the intricacy of law points frequently requires the arguments to be expanded, and expressed in different lights, in order to be completely apprehended.

Candor in stating the arguments of his adversary, cannot be too much recommended to every pleader. Should he disguise them, or place them in a false light, the artifice will be soon discovered; and the judge and the hearers will conclude, that he either wants discernment to perceive, or fairness to admit, his opponent's reasoning. But if he state with accuracy and candor, the arguments used against him, before he endeavors to confute them, a strong prepossession will prevail in his favor. He will appear to have entire confidence in his own cause, since he does not attempt to support it by artifice or concealment. The judge will, consequently, be inclined to receive much more readily, the impressions made upon him by a speaker who appears, at the same time, both candid and intelligent.

Wit may sometimes be serviceable at the bar, particularly in a lively reply, by which ridicule may be thrown on what an adversary has advanced. But a young pleader should be cautious how he admits too freely the indulgence of this dazzling talent. His office is not to excite laughter, but to produce conviction; nor, perhaps, did ever any one rise to eminence in his profession, by being a witty lawyer.

Since an advocate personates his client, he must plead

Whereas, what is the effect of omitting all superfluous circumstances in the recital? In what, however, does a more diffuse manner seem requisite; and why? Why should candor, in stating the arguments of an adversary, be particularly observed by every pleader; and what effect will it produce? Of wit at the bar, what is remarked; but about what should a young pleader be cautious; and why? Why must an advocate plead his cause with warmth; but about what must he be cautious; and for what reason?

his cause with a proper degree of warmth. He must be cautious, however, not to sacrifice his earnestness and sensibility, by an equal degree of ardor on every subject. There is a dignity of character which it is highly important for every one of this profession to support. An opinion of probity and honor in the pleader, is his most powerful instrument of persuasion. He should always, therefore, decline embarking in causes which are odious and manifestly unjust; and, when he supports a doubtful cause, he should lay the chief stress upon the arguments which appear to his judgment the most forcible; reserving his zeal and indignation for cases where injustice and iniquity are notorious.

What is a pleader's most powerful instrument of persuasion; what should he, therefore, always decline; and when he supports a doubtful cause, what course should he pursue?

ANALYSIS.

1. Eloquence of the bar.

A. Differs from popular eloquence.

- a. The first difference.
- b. The second.
- c. The third.

B. Ancient orations not models for modern pleaders.

C. Requisites for a lawyer's success.

- a. A profound knowledge of his profession.

b. Eloquence in pleading.

D. Directions for speaking at the bar.

- a. Be calm and temperate.
- b. Avoid verbosity.
- c. Be clear and distinct.
- d. Be concise in narration.
- e. Be candid in stating an opponent's arguments.
- f. Be warm and earnest.

LECTURE XXVII.

ELOQUENCE OF THE PULPIT.

HAVING already treated of the eloquence of popular assemblies, and of the eloquence of the bar, we shall next consider the strain and spirit of that eloquence which is suited to the pulpit.

This field of public speaking has evidently several advantages peculiar to itself. The dignity and importance of its subjects must be allowed to be superior to any other. They are such as ought to interest every one, and can be brought home to every man's heart; and such as admit, at the same time, both the highest embellishment in description, and the greatest warmth and vehemence of expression. In treating his subject, the preacher has also peculiar advantages. He speaks not to one or a few judges, but to a large assembly. He is secure from all interruption. He chooses his subject at leisure; and has all the assistance that the most accurate premeditation can give him.

But, together with these advantages, there are also peculiar difficulties that attend the eloquence of the pulpit. The preacher, it is true, has no contention with an adversary; but debate awakens genius, and excites attention. The pulpit orator is, perhaps, in too quiet possession of his field. His subjects, though noble and important, are trite and common. They have, for ages, employed so many speakers, and so many pens; the public ear is so much accustomed to them, that it requires more than an ordinary power of genius to fix attention. Nothing is more difficult than to bestow on what is common, the grace of novelty. No sort of composition whatever, is such a trial of skill, as where the merit of it lies wholly in the execution; not in giving any information that is new, not in convincing men of what they did not believe; but in dressing truths which they knew, and of

The eloquence suited to what, shall we now consider? What peculiar advantages has this field of public speaking? In treating his subject, also, what advantages has the preacher? But together with these advantages, what difficulties attend the eloquence of the pulpit? What is a very difficult task; and what sort of composition is the greatest trial of skill?

which they were before convinced, in such colors as may most forcibly effect their imagination and heart. It must be remembered, too, that the subject of the preacher generally confines him to abstract qualities, to virtues and vices; whereas that of other popular speakers leads them to treat of persons; which is a subject generally more interesting to the hearers, and which occupies more powerfully the imagination. It is the business of the preacher to make you detest the crime only; the pleader makes you detest the criminal. He describes a living person; and with more facility rouses your indignation. Hence it comes to pass, that though we have a great number of moderately good preachers, we have very few that are singularly eminent. We are still far from perfection in the art of preaching; and perhaps there are few things in which it is more difficult to excel. The object, however, is noble, and worthy, upon many accounts, of being pursued with attention, ardor, and perseverance.

It may, perhaps, occur to some, that preaching is no proper subject of eloquence. This, it may be said, belongs only to human studies and inventions; but the truths of religion will prove the more successful, in proportion to the greater simplicity, and the less mixture of art with which they are set forth. This objection would have weight, if eloquence were an ostentatious and deceitful art—the study of words and of plausibility, only calculated to please the ear. But this is, by no means, the true idea of eloquence. True eloquence is the art of placing truth in the most advantageous light for conviction and persuasion. This is what every good man who preaches the gospel not only may, but ought to have at heart; for it is most intimately connected with the success of his ministry.

An essential requisite for excelling in preaching, is a fixed and habitual view of its end and object. This, undoubtedly, is to persuade men to become good. Every sermon should, consequently, be a persuasive oration. It is not to discuss

What, also, must be remembered? What is, respectively, the business of the preacher, and of the pleader; what does the latter describe; and hence what comes to pass? What remarks follow? What may, perhaps, occur to some; and of this what may be said? Under what circumstances would this objection have weight? But what is true eloquence; and why should every preacher have this at heart? What is an essential requisite for excelling in preaching; and what is this? What, consequently, should every sermon be; and how is this illustrated?

some abstruse point, that the preacher ascends the pulpit : it is not to illustrate some metaphysical truth, or to inform his hearers of something which they never heard before, but it is to make them better ; it is to give them, at the same time, clear views and persuasive impressions of religious truth. That abstract and philosophical manner of preaching, therefore, however much it may sometimes have been admired, is formed upon a very faulty idea, and deviates, essentially, from the just plan of pulpit eloquence.

If the idea thus given of a sermon, be correct, it naturally follows that the preacher himself, in order to be successful, must be a good man. It is not sufficient that he speculatively believe the truth and importance of those principles which he inculcates upon others ; but he must have also a lively and serious feeling of them. This will always give an earnestness and strength, a fervor of piety to his exhortations, superior, in its effects, to all the arts of studied eloquence ; and indeed, without it, the mere declaimer will seldom be concealed. A spirit of true piety is the most effectual guard against those errors which preachers are apt to commit. It makes their discourses solid, cogent, and useful ; and prevents those frivolous and ostentatious harangues, which have no other aim than merely to make a parade of speech, or to amuse an audience.

The principal characteristics of the eloquence suited to the pulpit, as distinguished from other kinds of public speaking, appear to be, gravity and warmth. The serious nature of the subjects belonging to the pulpit, requires gravity ; their importance to mankind, requires warmth. It is, however, far from being either easy or common to unite these characters of eloquence. The grave, when it predominates, becomes a dull, uniform solemnity. The warm, when it wants gravity, borders on the theatrical and light. The union of the two must be studied by all preachers, as of the utmost consequence, both in the composition of their dis-

Of an abstract and philosophical manner of preaching, therefore, what is remarked ? If the idea thus given of a sermon, be correct, what naturally follows ? What is not sufficient ; what must he have ; and of this, what will always be the effect ? What is the most effectual guard against those errors which preachers are apt to commit ; and why ? What are the principal characteristics of the eloquence suited to the pulpit ; and why ? Why is it not easy to unite those characters of eloquence ? In what must the union of the two be studied as of the utmost consequence ; and when united, what do they form ?

courses, and in their manner of delivery. When united, they form that character of preaching which the French call *onction*—that affecting, penetrating, and interesting manner, flowing from a strong sense in the preacher, of the importance of those truths which he delivers, and an earnest desire that they may make full impression on the hearts of his hearers.

We now proceed to those rules and observations which respect a sermon as a particular species of composition.

The first which we shall mention is, to attend to its unity. By this we mean, that there should be some one main point to which the whole tenor of the sermon shall refer. It must not be a pile of different subjects heaped upon each other, but one subject must predominate through the whole. This unity, however, does not require that there should be no divisions or separate heads in the discourse, or that one single thought only should be exhibited in different lights. It is not confined by such narrow limits; it admits of some variety; it requires that union and connection be so far preserved only, as to make the whole concur in some one impression on the mind. Thus, for instance, a preacher may employ several different arguments to enforce the love of God; he may also enquire into the causes of the decay of this virtue; still one great object is presented to the mind: but if, because his text says, 'He that loveth God, must love his brother also,' he should therefore mingle, in the same discourse, arguments for the love of God, and for the love of our neighbor, he would greatly offend against unity, and leave a very confused impression on the minds of his hearers.

In the second place, sermons are always the more striking, and generally the more useful, in proportion as the subject of them is precise and particular. This follows, in a great measure, from what has just been illustrated. Though a general subject is capable of being conducted with a considerable degree of unity, yet that unity can never be so complete as in a particular one. General subjects, indeed, such as the excellency of the pleasures of religion, are often

To what do we now proceed; and what is the first? By this what do we mean; but what does not this require? How far, only, does it require that union be preserved; and how is this remark illustrated? But by what course would he greatly offend against unity; and what would be its effect? In the second place, what sermons are the most useful? From what does this follow; and why? By whom are general subjects often chosen; why; and what is observed of them?

chosen by young preachers as the most showy, and the easiest to be handled; and, doubtless, general views of religion are not to be neglected, as, on several occasions, they have great propriety. But these subjects are not the most favorable for producing the high effects of preaching. Attention is much more readily commanded, by taking some particular view of a great subject, and directing to that point the whole force of argument and eloquence. To recommend some one virtue, or to inveigh against a particular vice, affords a subject not deficient in unity or precision; but if that virtue or vice be considered as assuming a particular aspect, as it appears in certain characters, or affects certain situations in life, the subject becomes still more interesting. The execution is, certainly more difficult, but the merit and the effect are higher.

In the third place, a preacher should be cautious not to exhaust his subject; for nothing is more opposite to persuasion than an unnecessary fulness. He should select the most useful, striking, and persuasive topics, which the text suggests, and rest the discourse upon these. There are always some things which he may suppose to be known, and others which he need only slightly touch. If he seeks to omit nothing which is suggested by his subject, he will unavoidably encumber it, and weaken its force.

In the fourth place, the preacher should study, above all things, to render his instructions interesting to his hearers. This is the great trial of true genius for the eloquence of the pulpit; for nothing is so fatal to success in preaching, as a dry manner. The great secret lies in preaching in such a manner as to bring home all that is spoken to the hearts of those who hear, so as to make every man think that the preacher is addressing him in particular. He should, consequently, avoid all intricate reasonings; avoid expressing himself in general speculative propositions; or laying down practical truths in an abstract, metaphysical manner. As

But why are not these subjects the most favorable for producing the high effects of preaching? What affords a subject not deficient in unity; but when does the subject become still more interesting? What remark follows? In the third place, of what should a preacher be cautious; and why? What course should he pursue; why; and what remarks follow? In the fourth place, what above all things should the preacher study; and of this, what is remarked? In what lies the great secret; and what should he, consequently, avoid? How ought a discourse, as far as possible, be carried on; and not in what strain?

much as possible, a discourse ought to be carried on in a strain of direct address to the audience; not in the strain of one writing an essay, but of one speaking to a multitude, and studying to connect what is called application, or what has an immediate reference to practice, with the doctrinal and didactic parts of the sermon.

It is a great advantage to keep always in view, the different ages, characters, and conditions of men, and to accommodate directions and exhortations to each of these different classes. Whenever you bring forth what a man feels to touch his own character, or to suit his own circumstances, you are sure of his attention. No study, therefore, is more necessary for a preacher, than the study of human life, and of the human heart. To be able to unfold the heart, and to discover a man to himself, in a light in which he never saw his own character before, produces a wonderful effect. As long as a preacher hovers in a cloud of general observations, and descends not to trace the particular lines and features of manners, the audience are apt to think themselves unconcerned in the description. It is the striking accuracy of the moral characters that gives the chief power and effect to a preacher's discourse. Hence, examples founded on historical facts, and drawn from real life, of which kind the scriptures afford many, always, when they are well chosen, command high attention. Those sermons, therefore, though the most difficult in composition, are not only the most beautiful, but also the most useful, which are founded on the illustration of some character, or remarkable piece of history, in the sacred writings; by the pursuit of which, we may trace, and lay open, some of the most secret windings of the human heart. Other topics of preaching have become trite and common; but this is an extensive field, has hitherto been little explored, and possesses all the advantages of being curious, new, and in the highest degree useful. Bishop Butler's sermon on the *Character of Baalam*, is a good example of this kind of preaching.

In the fifth and last place, the model of preaching should

What is always of great advantage; and why? What study is, therefore, of great importance to the preacher; and what produces a wonderful effect? When are an audience apt to think themselves unconcerned in a description? What is it that gives the chief power and effect to a preacher's discourse; and hence what command high attention? What sermons, therefore, are both the most useful and the most beautiful; and why? What sermon is a good example of this kind of preaching? What is, in the fifth and last place, remarked; and of these what is observed?

never be taken from any particular fashion that may chance to prevail. These are torrents which swell to-day, and will have spent themselves by to-morrow. Sometimes poetical preaching is fashionable, and sometimes philosophical: at one time it must be all pathetic; at another all argumentative, according as some celebrated preacher has set the example. Each of these modes, in the extreme, is very faulty; and he who conforms himself to any one of them, will both confine his genius, and corrupt it. It is the universal taste of mankind which is subject to no such changing modes, that alone is entitled to any authority; and this will never give its sanction to any strain of preaching, but what is founded on human nature, connected with usefulness, adapted to the proper idea of a sermon, as a serious, persuasive oration, delivered to a multitude, in order to make them better men. Truth and good sense are firm, and will establish themselves; mode and humor are feeble and fluctuating. No example, however admired, should be implicitly followed. From various examples, the preacher may collect materials for improvement; but the servility of imitation will extinguish his genius, or expose its poverty to his hearers.

The style which the pulpit requires must be very perspicuous. As discourses spoken there, are calculated for the instruction of all sorts of hearers, plainness and simplicity should reign in them. All unusual words should be avoided; especially all words that are merely poetical, or merely philosophical. Young preachers are apt to be caught with the glare of these; and in young composers the error may be excusable: but they may be assured that it is an error, and proceeds from their not having yet acquired a correct taste. The language of sacred scripture, properly employed, is a great ornament to sermons. It may be introduced, either in the way of quotation, or allusion. Direct quotations, brought from scripture, in order to support what the preacher inculcates, both give authority to his

What illustrations follow; and what is said of each of these modes? What is subject to no such changing modes; and what is remarked of it? What is respectively observed of truth and good sense, and of mode and humor; and what remarks follow? In the style of sermons, why should plainness and simplicity reign; and what should be avoided? Of young preachers in this respect, what is remarked; but of what may they be assured? What is a great ornament to sermons; and how may it be introduced? How is this illustrat

doctrine, and render his discourse more solemn and impressive. Allusions to remarkable passages, or expressions of scripture, when introduced with propriety, have generally a pleasing effect. They afford the preacher a fund of metaphorical expression which no other composition enjoys, and by means of which he can vary and enliven his style.

Whether it be most proper to write sermons fully, and commit them accurately to memory, or to study only the matter and thoughts, and trust the expression to the delivery, perhaps no general rule can be given. Preachers, in the choice of either of these methods, must follow their different genius. The expressions which come warm and glowing from the heart, during the fervor of pronunciation, will often have a superior grace and energy to those which are studied in the retirement of the closet. But then this fluency and power of expression, cannot, at all times, be depended upon; it is, therefore, proper to begin, at least, the practice of preaching, with writing as accurately as possible. This is, at the commencement, absolutely necessary, in order to acquire the power and habit of both speaking and thinking correctly upon religious subjects. After habits of correctness shall have been thoroughly formed, the preacher may venture to relax, in a degree, his attention to this subject.

About what can no general rule be given; and what must preachers, in the choice of either method, follow? What advantage attends studying the matter and thoughts only? But as the fluency cannot, at all times, be depended upon, how is it proper to begin; and why?

ANALYSIS.

Pulpit eloquence.

1. Its advantages.
2. The difficulties that attend it.
 - A. An objection to it considered.
3. An habitual view of its object essential.
4. The character of the preacher.
5. The characteristics of pulpit eloquence.
6. Directions for composing sermons.

- A. Unity to be attended to.
- B. The subject to be particular.
- C. Not to be exhausted.
- D. The instructions to be interesting.
 - a. Knowledge of human nature.
- E. No particular model to be followed.
7. The style.
8. Reading sermons considered.

LECTURE XXVIII.

CONDUCT OF A DISCOURSE IN ALL ITS PARTS—INTRODUCTION—DIVISION— NARRATION AND EXPLICATION.

HAVING already considered what is peculiar to the three great fields of public speaking—popular assemblies, the bar, and the pulpit, we shall now treat of what is common to them all; and explain the conduct of a discourse, or oration, in general.

The parts that compose a regular formal oration are the following six: first, the exordium or introduction; secondly, the state, and the division of the subject; thirdly, narration or explication; fourthly, the reasoning or arguments; fifthly, the pathetic part; and lastly, the conclusion. It is not necessary that each of these should enter into every public discourse, or that they should be introduced in the order here mentioned. There is no reason for being so formal on every occasion; nay, it would often be a fault, and would render a discourse pedantic and stiff. There are many excellent discourses in which some of these parts are altogether omitted. But as they are the natural and constituent parts of a regular oration, and as, in every discourse, some of them must occur, it is agreeable to our present purpose, to examine each of them distinctly.

We begin, of course, with the introduction. This is evidently common to all the three kinds of public speaking. It is not a rhetorical figure, but is founded upon nature, and suggested by common sense. When one is going to counsel another—when he takes it upon himself to instruct, or to reprove, prudence will generally direct him not to do it abruptly, but to use some preparation—to begin with something that may incline the person to whom he addresses himself, to judge favorably of what he is about to say, and

Having considered what is peculiar to the eloquence of popular assemblies, of the bar, and of the pulpit, of what shall we now treat? What six parts compose a regular formal oration? Of these what is remarked; and why? But why should each of them be examined distinctly? With which do we begin; and of this, what is observed? How is this illustrated?

may dispose them to such a train of thought as will forward and assist the purpose which he has in view. Accordingly, the design of the introduction is, in the first place, to conciliate the good will of the hearers; secondly, to excite their attention; and in the third place, to render them open to persuasion.

Some one of these ends should be proposed by every introduction; unless the speaker is previously secure of the good will, the attention, and the docility of his audience. In that case, a formal introduction may, without any impropriety, be omitted. Respect for his hearers, will then require a short exordium only, to prepare them for the other parts of his discourse.

Having made these general remarks on the nature and object of an introduction, we proceed to give some rules for the proper composition of it. These are the more necessary, as this is a part of the discourse which requires great care. It is always of importance to begin well; to make a favorable impression at first setting out; when the minds of the hearers, as yet vacant and free, are most disposed to receive any impression easily. We must add, also, that a good introduction is often found to be extremely difficult. Few parts of a discourse give more trouble to the composer, or require more delicacy in the execution.

The first rule is, that the introduction should be easy and natural. It should always be suggested by the subject. The writer should not plan it, till after he has meditated, in his own mind, the substance of his discourse. By taking a contrary course, and composing in the first place an introduction, the writer will often find, that he is either led to lay hold of some commonplace topic, or that, instead of the introduction being accommodated to the discourse, he is under the necessity of accommodating the whole discourse to the introduction which he had previously written.

In the second place, in an introduction, correctness of

Accordingly, what is the design of the introduction? Without what, should some one of these ends be proposed by every introduction? In that case, what may be omitted; what will respect for his hearers require; and why? Having made these general remarks, to give what do we proceed; and why are these the more necessary? What is always of importance; and what must we also add? What remark follows? What is the first rule; and by what should it always be suggested? Till when should the writer not plan it; and what is the effect of a contrary course? In the second place, what should be carefully studied; and why is this particularly requisite?

expression should be carefully studied. This is particularly requisite on account of the situation of the hearers. At the beginning they are more disposed to criticise than at any other period; they are then unoccupied with the subject or the arguments; their attention is wholly directed to the speaker's style and manner. Care, therefore, is requisite, to prepossess them in his favor; though too much art must be cautiously avoided, as it will then be more easily detected, and will derogate from that persuasion which the other parts of the discourse are intended to produce.

In the third place, modesty is also an indispensable characteristic of every judicious introduction. If the speaker begins with an air of arrogance and ostentation, the self-love and pride of his hearers will be presently awakened, and will follow him, with a very suspicious eye, through the rest of his discourse. His modesty should appear, not only in his expressions, but in his whole manner—in his looks, in his gestures, and in the tones of his voice. Every audience is flattered by those marks of respect and awe which are paid them by the person who addresses them. The modesty of an introduction, however, should betray nothing mean or abject. It is always of great advantage to an orator, that, together with modesty and deference to his hearers, he show a certain sense of dignity, arising from a persuasion of the justice or importance of the subject on which he is to speak.

In the fourth place, except in particular cases, the orator should not put forth all his strength at the beginning; but should rise and grow upon his hearers as his discourse advances. The introduction is seldom the place for vehemence and passion. The audience must be gradually prepared, before the speaker can venture on strong and impassioned sentiments. Yet when the subject is of such a nature, that the very mention of it naturally awakens some passionate emotion; or when the unexpected presence of some person or object in a popular assembly, inflames the speaker; either of these will justify an abrupt and vehement exordium.

What is their situation at the beginning; and why is care their requisite? What must, at the same time, be cautiously avoided; and why? What, in the third place, is indispensable; and why is it the case? In what should his modesty appear; and by what is every audience flattered? What, however, should not the modesty of an introduction betray; and what is always of great advantage to an orator? What is, in the fourth place, remarked; and why? The audience must be gradually prepared before the speaker can enter upon what; yet what will justify an abrupt and vehement exordium?

Thus, the appearance of Catiline in the Roman senate, renders the violent opening of Cicero's first oration against him, very natural and proper. 'Quousque tandem, Catilina, abutere patientia nostra?' And Bishop Atterbury, in preaching from this text, 'Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me,' ventures on this bold exordium: 'And can any man then be offended in thee, blessed Jesus?' Which address to our Savior he continues for some time, till he enters on the division of his subject. But these introductions should be attempted by very few, as they promise so much vehemence and ardor through the rest of the discourse, that it is extremely difficult to satisfy the expectation of the hearers.

In the fifth place, the introduction should not anticipate any material part of the subject. When the topics or arguments, which are, afterwards to be enlarged upon, are hinted at, and, in part, exhibited in the introduction, they lose, upon their second appearance, the grace of novelty. The impression intended to be made by any principal idea, is always made with the greatest advantage, when it is made entire, and in its proper place.

In the last place, the introduction ought to be proportioned, both in length and in kind, to the discourse that is to follow: in length, as nothing can be more absurd than to erect a very great portico before a small building; and in kind, as it is no less absurd to overcharge, with superb ornaments, the portico of a plain dwelling-house, or to make the entrance to a monument as gay as that to an arbor. Common sense directs that every part of a discourse should be suited to the strain and spirit of the whole.

After the introduction, what generally comes next in order, is the proposition or annunciation of the subject; concerning which we shall only observe, that it should be as clear and distinct as possible, and expressed without affectation, in the most concise and simple manner. To this generally succeeds the division of the discourse; on which

What examples of illustration follow; and what is remarked of them? But why should these introductions be attempted by very few? What, in the fifth place, is remarked; and why? When is the impression intended to be made by any principal idea, always made with the greatest advantage? In the last place, to what should the introduction be proportioned; and for what reason? What does common sense direct? What generally comes next to the introduction; and concerning it, what only is observed? To this what generally succeeds; but of it, what is not to be understood?

it is necessary to make some remarks. It is not to be understood that in every discourse, a formal division or distribution of its parts is required. There are many occasions of public speaking when this is neither requisite nor would be proper; when the discourse, perhaps, is to be short, or only one point is to be treated of; or when the speaker does not choose to warn his hearers of the method he is to follow, or of the conclusion to which he seeks to bring them. Order of one kind or other, is, indeed, essential to every good discourse—that is, every thing should be so arranged, as that what goes before may give light and force to what follows. But this may be accomplished by means of a concerted method. What we call division is, when the method is propounded in form to the hearers; and in the management of it, the following rules should be carefully observed.

First, the several parts into which the subject is divided should be really distinct from each other—that is, that no one include another. It were a very absurd division, for instance, if a speaker should attempt to treat, first, of the advantages of virtue, and next, of those of justice or temperance; because, the first head evidently comprehends the second, as a genus does the species. Such a method of proceeding will, therefore, involve the subject in indistinctness and disorder.

Secondly, we must be careful always to follow the order of nature; beginning with the most simple points, such as are most easily understood, and necessary to be first discussed; and proceeding thence to those which are built upon the former, and which suppose them to be known. The subject, in fact, must be divided into those parts into which it is most easily and naturally resolved.

Thirdly, the members of a division ought to exhaust the subject, otherwise the division is incomplete; the subject exhibited by pieces and corners only, without any plan being offered by which the whole may be displayed.

On what occasions, is this neither requisite nor proper? What is, indeed, essential to every good discourse; and what is meant by it? But how may this be accomplished; and what remark follows? In the management of this, what is the first rule to be observed? What would be a very absurd division; and why? What will be the effect of such a method of proceeding? In the second place, what order must we follow; and how is this illustrated? The subject must, in fact, be divided into what parts? In the third place, why should the members of the division exhaust the subject?

Fourthly, the terms in which our partitions are expressed, should be as concise as possible. A division will always appear to the most advantage, when the several heads are expressed in the clearest, most forcible, and at the same time, the fewest words possible. This never fails to make an agreeable impression on the hearers; and contributes, also, to make the divisions more easily remembered.

Fifthly, an unnecessary multiplication of heads should be cautiously avoided. To divide a subject into a great many minute parts, by endless divisions and subdivisions, has always a bad effect in speaking. In a logical treatise this may not be improper; but it renders an oration hard and dry, and unnecessarily fatigues the memory. A sermon may admit from three to five or six heads, including subdivisions; seldom are more allowable.

The next constituent part of a discourse, which we mentioned, was narration or explication. These two are joined together, both because they fall nearly under the same rules, and because they generally answer the same purpose; serving to illustrate the cause, or the subject of which the orator treats, before he proceeds to argue either on the one side or the other; or to make any attempt for interesting the passions of the hearers.

In pleadings at the bar, narration is often a very important part of the discourse, and requires to be particularly attended to. Besides its being in any case, no easy matter to relate with grace and propriety; there is in narration at the bar, a peculiar difficulty. The pleader must say nothing but what is true; and, at the same time, he must avoid saying any thing that will injure his cause. The facts which he relates, are to be the ground-work of all his future reasoning. To recount them so as to keep strictly within the bounds of truth, and yet to present them under the colors most favorable to his cause, demands no small exertion of skill and dexterity.

What is, in the fourth place, observed; and when will a division always appear to the most advantage? Of this, what is remarked? In the fifth place, what should be avoided; and what has always a bad effect in speaking? Where may this not be improper; but what is its effect on oration? Of how many divisions may a sermon admit? What is the next constituent part of a discourse; and why are these two joined together? Why does narration, in pleadings at the bar, require to be particularly attended to; and what are the pleader's difficulties? What demands no small exertion of skill and dexterity?

To be clear and distinct, to be probable, and to be concise, are the qualities which writers chiefly consider as essential to narration. Distinctness is requisite to the whole of the discourse, but belongs especially to narration, which ought to throw a light on all that follows. At the bar, a fact, or a single circumstance left in obscurity, or misunderstood by the judge, may destroy the effect of all the argument and reasoning which the pleader employs. If his narration be improbable, it will be disregarded; if it is tedious and diffuse, it will fatigue, and be forgotten. To render variation distinct, a particular attention is requisite in ascertaining, clearly, the names, the dates, the places, and every other important circumstance of the facts recounted. In order to be probable in narration, it is necessary to exhibit the characters of those persons of whom we speak, and to show that their actions proceed from such motives as are natural, and likely to gain belief. To be as concise as the subject will admit, all superfluous circumstances must be rejected, by which the narration will be rendered both more forcible and more clear.

In sermons, where there is seldom any occasion for narration, explication of the subject to be discoursed on occupies the place of narration at the bar, and is to be conducted in a similar manner. It must be concise, clear, and distinct; in a style correct and elegant, rather than abounding with ornament. To explain the doctrine of the text with propriety; to give a full and clear account of the nature of that virtue or duty which forms the subject of the discourse, is properly the didactic part of preaching; on the right execution of which much depends for what comes afterwards in the way of persuasion. In order to succeed, the preacher must meditate profoundly on the subject, so as to place it in a clear and striking point of view. He must consider what light it may derive from other passages of scripture; observe whether it be a subject nearly allied to some other from which it ought to be distinguished; whether it can be advantageously illustrated by comparing, or opposing it to some

What do writers think essential to narration; and what remark follows? How is this illustrated? To render narration distinct, to what is particular attention requisite? In order to be probable in narration, what is necessary; and what remark follows? In sermons what occupies the place of narration; and what properties must it possess? What is properly the didactic part of preaching; and what is said of it? In order to succeed, what must the preacher do; and what remark follows?

other thing ; by searching into causes, or tracing effects ; by pointing out examples, or appealing to the hearts of the hearers ; that thus, a determined, precise, and circumstantial view, may be afforded of the doctrine inculcated. By such distinct and apt illustrations of the known truths of religion, a preacher may both display great merit as a composer, and, what is infinitely more valuable, render his discourses weighty, instructive, and beneficial.

ANALYSIS.

I. The component parts of a discourse.

A. The introduction.

- a. To be easy and natural.
- b. To be correct in the expression.
- c. To be modest.
- d. To be calmly conducted.
- e. Not to anticipate the subject.

B. The enunciation.

C. The division.

- a. The parts to be distinct.
- b. The order of nature to be followed.
- c. The members to exhaust the style.
- d. The division to be expressed with precision.
- e. The heads not to be unnecessarily multiplied.

D. Narration or explication.

LECTURE XXIX.

THE ARGUMENTATIVE PART OF A DIS- COURSE—THE PATHETIC PART— THE PERORATION,

SINCE the great end for which men speak on any serious occasion, is to convince their hearers that something is either true, or right, or good; and consequently to influence their practice; reason and argument must constitute the foundation of all manly and persuasive eloquence.

With respect to arguments, three things are requisite: first, the invention of them; secondly, their proper disposition and arrangement; and thirdly, the expressing of them in such a style and manner, as to give them their full force.

The first of these, invention, is, doubtless, the most material, and the groundwork of the rest. But with respect to this, art can afford but small assistance. It can aid a speaker, however, in arranging and expressing those arguments which his knowledge of the subject has discovered. The ancient rhetoricians attempted to go much farther than this. They formed rhetoric into a more complete system; and professed not only to assist public speakers in setting off their arguments to most advantage, but to supply the defect of their invention, and to teach them where to find arguments on every subject and cause. Hence their doctrine of topics, or 'Loci Communes' and 'Sedes argumentorum,' which makes so great a figure in the writings of Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian. These topics, or loci, were no other than general ideas applicable to a great many different subjects, which the orator was directed to consult, in order to find out materials for his speech. As in demonstrative orations, for instance, the heads from which any one could be decried or praised; his birth, his country, his education, his kindred, the qualities of his body, the qualities of his mind, the for-

Why must reason and argument constitute the foundation of all eloquence? With respect to arguments, what three things are requisite? Of the first of these, what is remarked; and what only can art here do? On this subject, what did the ancient rhetoricians do; and hence what doctrines? What were these topics; and of this remark, what illustration follows?

tune he enjoyed, the station he had filled, &c.; and in deliberative orations, the topics that might be used in recommending any public measure, or dissuading from it; such as honesty, justice, facility, profit, pleasure, glory, assistance from friends, mortification to enemies, and the like. But such discourse can be no other than trivial. What is truly solid and persuasive, must be drawn from a thorough knowledge of the subject, and profound meditation on it. They who would direct students of oratory to any other sources of argumentation, only delude them; and by attempting to render rhetoric too perfect an art, they render it, in fact, a trifling and childish study.

We proceed, now, to point out the assistance that can be given, not with respect to the invention, but with respect to the disposition and conduct of arguments.

Two different methods may be used by orators, in the conduct of their reasoning; the terms for which are, the analytic, and the synthetic method. The analytic is, when the orator conceals his intention concerning the point he is to prove, till he has gradually brought his hearers to the designed conclusion. As, for instance, when one intended to prove the being of a God, sets out with observing that every thing which he sees in the world has had a beginning; that whatever has had a beginning, must have a prior cause; that in human productions, art shown in the effect, necessarily infers design in the cause: and proceeds leading you on from one cause to another, till you arrive at one supreme first cause, from whom is derived all the order and design visible in his works. This is much the same as the Socratic method, by which that philosopher silenced the sophists of his age. It is a very artful method of reasoning; may be carried on with much beauty, and is proper to be used when the hearers are strongly prejudiced against any truth, and must be led to conviction, by imperceptible steps.

But there are few subjects that will admit of this method, and not many occasions on which it is proper to employ it.

Of such discourse what is remarked; and from whence must what is truly solid be drawn? Of those who direct students of oratory to any other sources of argumentation, what is observed? To what do we now proceed? What two methods may be used by orators in the conduct of their reasonings? Of the analytic, what is remarked; and what instance of illustration is given? This is much the same as what method; and what is said of it? But as there are few subjects that will admit of this method, what mode of reasoning is more generally used; and what is it?

The mode of reasoning more generally used, and best suited to the train of popular speaking, is what is called the synthetic; when the point to be proved is fairly laid down, and one argument upon another is made to bear upon it, till the hearers are fully convinced. But whatever course may be pursued, it is evident that much will depend on the right arrangement of the arguments used; so that they shall not jostle and embarrass one another, but give mutual aid; and bear with the fairest and fullest direction on the point in view. Concerning this, the following rules may be taken:

In the first place, avoid blending arguments together, that are of a separate nature. All arguments whatever, are intended to prove one or the other of these three things—that something is true; that it is morally right or fit; or that it is profitable and good. Truth, duty, and interest, are the three great subjects of discussion among mankind. But the arguments employed upon either of them, must be generically distinct, and he who blends them all under one topic, which he calls his argument, as in sermons, especially, is too often done, will render his reasoning indistinct and negligent.

In the second place, with regard to the different degrees of strength in argument, the general rule is to advance in the way of climax, from the weakest to the most forcible. This method is to be recommended when the speaker is convinced that his course is clear, and easy to be proved. But this rule must not be always followed. If he be apprehensive of his cause, and has but one material argument on which to lay the stress, putting less confidence in the rest, in this case it is often proper to place his most forcible argument in the front; to prejudice his hearers as early as possible in his favor, and dispose them to pay attention to the weaker reasoning which he may afterwards introduce. When, amidst a variety of arguments, there are one or two more feeble than the rest, though proper to be used, Cicero

But whatever course may be pursued, on what will much depend; and why? Concerning this, what is the first rule given? To prove what are all arguments whatever, intended; and what are the three great subjects of discussion among mankind? But as the arguments employed upon either of them must be generically distinct, what follows? In the second place, with regard to the different degrees of strength in argument, what is the general rule? When is this method recommended; but under what circumstances must it not be followed? When, amidst a variety of arguments, there are one or two more feeble than the rest, what course does Cicero advise?

advises that they be placed in the middle, as a situation less conspicuous than either the beginning or the end of the train of reasoning.

In the third place, when our arguments are strong and satisfactory, the more they are distinguished, and treated separately from each other, the better. Each can then bear to be introduced alone, placed in its full light, amplified, and contemplated. But when they are of a doubtful or presumptive kind, it is safer to crowd them together, to form them into a phalanx, that though individually weak, they may mutually support each other.

In the fourth place, arguments should never be extended too far, or multiplied too much. This serves rather to render a cause suspicious, than to increase its strength. A needless multiplicity of arguments, both burthen the memory, and detract from the weight of that conviction which a few well chosen arguments might produce. To expound them, also, beyond the bounds of reasonable illustration, is always enfeebling. It takes off from that '*vis et acumen*,' which should be the distinguishing character of the argumentative part of a discourse. When a speaker endeavors to expose a favorite argument in every possible point of view, it generally happens that, fatigued with the effort, he loses the spirit with which he set out, and ends with feebleness what he began with force.

Having attended, thus far, to the proper arrangement of arguments, we proceed to another essential part of a discourse—the pathetic; in which, if any where, eloquence reigns, and exerts its power. On this head we shall offer the following directions, which appear worthy of being remembered.

The first is, to consider carefully, whether the subject admit the pathetic, and render it proper; and if it does, what part of the discourse is most fit for attempting it. To determine these points, good sense is the only criterion; for it is evident that there are many subjects that admit not the pathetic at all, and

In the third place, what is remarked; and why? But when they are of a doubtful kind, what course is the safer; and why? What, in the fourth place, is observed of arguments; what is its effect; and why? What is, also, always enfeebling; and from what does it take off? What illustrative remark follows? Having attended, thus far, to the proper arrangement of arguments, to what do we next proceed? On this head, what is the first direction offered? To determine these points, what is the only criterion: and why?

that even in those that are susceptible of it, an attempt to excite the passions in the wrong place, may expose the orator to ridicule. It may in general be observed, that if we expect any emotion which we raise to have a lasting effect, we must secure in our favor the understanding and judgment. The hearers must be satisfied, that there are sufficient grounds for their engaging in the cause with zeal and ardor. They must be able to justify to themselves the passion which they feel; and remain satisfied that they are not carried away by mere delusion. Unless their minds be brought into this state, although they may have been heated by the orator's discourse, yet, as soon as he ceases to speak, they will resume their ordinary tone of thought; and the emotion which he has raised will die entirely away. Hence most writers assign the pathetic to the conclusion, as its natural place, this being the impression that one would choose to make last, leaving the minds of the hearers warmed with the subject, after argument and reasoning had produced their full effect.

In the second place, never set apart a head of a discourse in form, for raising any passion; never give warning that you are about to be pathetic, and call upon your hearers, as is sometimes done, to follow you in the attempt. Every previous preparation of this kind chills their sensibility. There is also a material difference between showing those to whom you speak, that they ought to be moved, and actually exciting their passions. To every emotion or passion, nature has adapted certain corresponding objects; and without setting these before the mind, it is impossible for an orator to excite that emotion. We are warmed with gratitude, we are touched with compassion, not when a speaker shows us that these are noble dispositions, and that it is our duty to feel them, or when he exclaims against us for our indifference and coldness. He is, all this time, addressing our reason and conscience only. He must point to us the kindness and tenderness of our friends; he must exhibit the distress suffered by the person for whom he would interest us; then, and

What may, in general, be observed; and of the hearers what is remarked? Unless their minds be brought into this state, what will follow? Hence what course do most writers pursue; and for what reason? In the second place, what must never be done; and why? Between what is there a material difference; and how is this illustrated? When are we warmed with gratitude, and touched with compassion?

not till then, our hearts begin to be touched, our gratitude or our compassion begins to flow. The foundation, therefore, of all successful execution in pathetic oratory is, to paint the object of that passion which we wish to raise, in the most natural and striking manner; to describe it with such circumstances as are likely to awaken it in the minds of others. Every passion is most strongly excited by sensation; as anger, by the feeling of an injury, or the presence of the injurer. Next to the influence of sense, is that of memory; and next to memory is the influence of imagination. Of this power, therefore, the orator must avail himself, so as to strike the imagination of the hearers with circumstances which, in lustre and steadiness, resemble those of sensation and resemblance. In order to accomplish this, the only effectual method is to be moved ourselves. There are a thousand interesting circumstances suggested by real passion, which no art can imitate, and no refinement supply. The passions are obviously contagious. The internal emotion of the speaker adds a pathos to his words, his looks, his gestures, and his whole manner, which exerts a power almost irresistible over those who hear him.

In the third place, to succeed in the pathetic, it is necessary to attend to the proper language of the passions. This, if we consult nature, we shall ever find is unaffected and simple. It may be animated with bold and strong figures, but it will have no ornament or finery. There is a material difference between painting to the imagination and to the heart. The one may be done with deliberation and coolness; the other must always be rapid and ardent. In the former, art and labor may be suffered to appear; in the latter, no proper effect can be produced, unless it seem to be the work of nature only. Hence all digressions should be avoided, which may interrupt or turn aside the swell of passion. Hence comparisons are always dangerous, and commonly quite improper in the midst of the pathetic. It

What, therefore, is the foundation of all successful execution in pathetic oratory? How is every passion most easily excited; and how is this illustrated? What influences succeed the influence of sense, in order; and of this power, therefore, why must the orator avail himself? To accomplish this, what is the only effectual method; and how is this remark illustrated? What, in the third place, is necessary to succeed in the pathetic; and what shall we ever find this to be? With what may it be animated; but what will it not have? Between what is there a material difference; and how is this illustrated? Hence, what should be avoided; what is also to be observed; and what remark follows?

is also to be observed, that emotions which are violent cannot be lasting. The pathetic, therefore, should not be prolonged and extended too much. A due regard should always be preserved to what the audience will bear; for he that attempts to carry them farther in passion, than they will follow him, annihilates his purpose—by endeavoring to warm them in the extreme, he takes the surest method of freezing them completely.

Concerning the peroration or conclusion of a discourse, a few words will be sufficient. Sometimes the whole pathetic part comes in most properly at the conclusion. Sometimes, when the discourse has been altogether argumentative, it is proper to conclude with summing up the arguments, placing them in one point of view, and leaving the impression of them full and strong on the minds of the hearers. For the principal rule of a conclusion, and that which nature obviously suggests, is, to place that last, on which we choose that the strength of our cause should rest.

In every kind of public speaking, it is important to hit the precise time of concluding, so as to bring the discourse just to a point, neither ending abruptly and unexpectedly, nor disappointing the expectation of the hearers, when they look for the discourse to be finished. The close should always be effected with dignity and spirit, that the minds of the hearers may be left warm, and that they may depart with a favorable impression of the subject and of the speaker.

To what should a due regard always be preserved; and why? Concerning the conclusion of a discourse, what is observed? Under different circumstances, what different courses are proper? What is the principal rule of a conclusion? In every kind of public speaking, what is important? How should the close always be effected; and why?

ANALYSIS.

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|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The arguments of a discourse. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. The invention of arguments. B. The analytic and synthetic methods. 2. The proper disposition of arguments. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Not to be blended together. B. The order of climax to be observed. C. Strong arguments to be treated distinctly. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> D. Not to be extended too far. 3. The pathetic part of a discourse. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Discretion to be observed. B. The hearers not to be warned to prepare for it. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The speaker to be, himself, affected. C. The language of passion to be observed. 4. The conclusion. |
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LECTURE XXX.

PRONUNCIATION, OR DELIVERY.

THE great objects to which every public speaker should direct his attention, in forming his delivery, are, first to speak so as to be fully understood by all who hear him ; and next, to express himself with such grace and energy, as to please and to move his audience.

In order to be fully and easily understood, the four chief requisites are, a due degree of loudness of voice, distinctness, slowness, and propriety of pronunciation.

The first attention of every public speaker, doubtless, must be, to enable those to whom he speaks, to hear him. He must endeavor to fill with his voice, the space occupied by the assembly. Though this power of voice is, in a great measure, a natural talent, it may receive considerable assistance from art. Much depends on the proper pitch and management of the voice. This may be distinguished by three gradations—the high, the middle, and the low. The high is used in calling aloud to some one at a distance ; the low approaches to a whisper : the middle is that which is employed in common conversation, and which should generally be used in public speaking ; for it is erroneous to suppose, that the highest pitch of the voice is requisite to be well heard by a great assembly. This is confounding two things materially different—loudness, or strength of sound, with the key or note on which we speak. The voice may be rendered louder without altering the key ; and the speaker will always be able to give most body, most persevering force of sound, to that pitch of voice to which, in conversation, he is accustomed. Whereas, if he begin on the highest pitch of his voice, he will fatigue himself, and speak with pain ; and whenever a man speaks with pain to him-

To what should every public speaker direct his attention in forming his delivery ? To be fully and easily understood, what are the four chief requisites ? What must be the first attention of every public speaker ; and what remarks follow ? On what does much depend ; how may this be distinguished ; and of them, respectively, what is remarked ? What is this confounding ; and as the voice may be rendered louder without altering the key, what follows ? Whereas, if he begin on the highest pitch, what will follow ; and of the voice, therefore, what is farther observed ?

self, he is always heard with pain by his audience. To the voice, therefore, may be given full strength and swell of sound; but it should always be pitched on the ordinary speaking key; a greater quantity of voice should never be uttered than can be afforded without pain, and without any extraordinary effort. To be well heard, it is useful for a speaker to fix his eye on some of the most distant persons in the assembly, and to consider himself as speaking to them. We naturally and mechanically express our words with such a degree of strength, as to be heard by one to whom we address ourselves, provided he be situated within the reach of our voice. This will be the case in public speaking, as well as in common conversation. But it must be remembered, that speaking too loud is peculiarly offensive. The ear is wounded when the voice comes upon it in rumbling indistinct masses; besides, it appears as if assent were demanded by mere vehemence and force of sound.

In the next place, to being well heard and clearly understood, distinctness of articulation is more conducive, perhaps, than mere loudness of sound. The quantity of sound requisite to fill even a large space, is less than is generally supposed; and with distinct articulation, a man of a weak voice will make it extend farther than the strongest voice can reach without it. This, therefore, demands peculiar attention. The speaker must give every sound which he utters its due proportion, and make every syllable, and every letter, be heard distinctly. To succeed in this, a rapidity of pronunciation must be avoided. A lifeless, drawing method, is, however, by no means to be adopted. To pronounce with a proper degree of slowness, and with full and clear articulation, cannot be too industriously studied, or too earnestly recommended. Such a pronunciation gives weight and dignity to language. It assists the voice, by the pauses and rests which it permits it more easily to make; and enables the speaker to swell all the sounds, both with more energy and more music. He may, by this means, preserve a due command over himself, and avoid that flutter of spirits

To be well heard, what is useful; and why? But what must be remembered; and why is this the case? In the next place, what is observed; and what remark follows? As this demands peculiar attention, what must the speaker do; and on this subject, what is farther remarked? What cannot be too earnestly studied; and why? By this means, what may he do?

produced by a rapid and hurried manner, which is destructive of all finished oratory.

In the third place, a public speaker must study propriety of pronunciation; or the giving to every word which he utters, that sound which the most polite usage of the language appropriates to it, in opposition to a broad or vulgar pronunciation. On this subject, however, written instructions will avail nothing. But there is one observation which it may be useful to make: in our language, every word of more syllables than one, has one accented syllable. The genius of the language requires the voice to mark that syllable by a stronger percussion, and to pass more slightly over the rest. The same accent should be given to every word in public speaking as in common discourse. In this respect many persons are apt to err. When they speak in public, and with solemnity, they pronounce differently from what they do at other times. They dwell upon syllables, and protract them; they multiply accents on the same word, from a false idea, that it adds gravity and strength to their discourse, and increases the pomp of public declamation. But this is one of the greatest faults that can be committed in pronunciation; it constitutes what is called a theatrical or mouthing manner, and gives an artificial, affected air to speech, which detracts, in a great degree, from its agreeableness, and its impression.

We shall now mention those higher parts of delivery, by studying which, a speaker endeavors, not merely to render himself intelligible, but to give grace and force to what he utters. These may be comprehended under four heads; emphases, pauses, tones, and gestures.

By emphasis is meant, a fuller and stronger sound of voice, by which we distinguish the accented syllable of some word on which we intend to lay a particular stress, and to show how it affects the rest of the sentence. To acquire the proper management of the emphasis, the principal, and indeed, the only rule which can be given is, that the speaker study to acquire a just conception of the force and spirit of

In the third place, what must a public speaker study? Though, on this subject, written instructions will be unavailing, yet what observation may be useful? In this respect, how do many persons err; but of this fault, what is remarked? What shall we now mention; and what is the effect of studying them? By emphasis what is meant; and to acquire the proper management of it, what is the only rule that can be given?

those sentiments which he intends to deliver. In all prepared discourses, it would be extremely useful, if they were read over or repeated in private, with a view of searching for the proper emphasis, before they were pronounced in public; marking, at the same time, the emphatical words in every sentence, or at least in the most important parts of the discourse, and fixing them well in the memory. A caution, however, must, at the same time, be given against multiplying the emphatical words too much. They only become striking when used with a prudent reserve. If they recur too frequently—if a speaker endeavors to render every thing that he says of high importance, by a multitude of strong emphases—they will soon fail to excite the attention of his hearers.

Next to emphases, the pauses in speaking demand attention. They are of two kinds: first, emphatical pauses; and secondly, such as mark the distinctions of sense. An emphatical pause is made, after something has been said of peculiar moment, and on which we wish to fix the hearers attention. Sometimes a matter of importance is preceded by a pause of this nature. Such pauses have the same effect as strong emphases, and are subject to the same rules; particularly to the caution just now given, of not repeating them too frequently. For since they excite particular attention, and consequently raise expectation, if this be not fully observed, they will occasion disappointment and disgust.

But the most common, and the principal use of pauses, is to mark the divisions of the sense, and, at the same time, to permit the speaker to draw his breath; and the just and graceful management of such pauses, is one of the most delicate and difficult articles in delivery. A proper command of the breath is peculiarly requisite to be acquired. To obtain this, every speaker should be very careful to provide a full supply of breath for what he is to utter. It is a

In all prepared discourses, what would be a very useful practice; but what caution must, at the same time, be given? When only do they become striking; and if they recur too frequently, what will be their effect? What next demand attention; and of what two kinds are they? When is an emphatical pause made; what effect have such pauses; and what follows? But what is the most common and principal use of pauses; and of the graceful management of them, what is remarked? What is here requisite; and to obtain this, what is necessary? To suppose what is a great mistake; and when may it easily be gathered?

great mistake to suppose, that the breath must be drawn only at the end of a period, when the voice is about to fall. It may easily be gathered at the intervals of a sentence, where the voice suffers only a momentary suspension; and hence a sufficient supply may be obtained for carrying on the largest period, without improper interruptions.

Pauses in public discourse, must be founded upon the manner in which we express ourselves in common, sensible conversation, and not upon the stiff artificial manner which we acquire from perusing books, according to the common punctuation. Sometimes it is only a slight and simple suspension of the voice which is proper; sometimes a degree of cadence is requisite; and sometimes that peculiar tone and cadence, which marks the conclusion of the sentence. In all these cases, a speaker is to regulate himself by attending to the manner in which nature teaches him to speak, when engaged in real and earnest discourse with others.

In reading or reciting verses, there is a difficulty in making the pauses with propriety. There are two kinds of pauses that belong to the music of verse; one at the end of the line, and the other in the middle of it. Rhyme always renders the former sensible, and compels an observance of it in the pronunciation. In blank verse it is less perceivable; and when there is no suspension in the sense, it has been doubted whether in reading it with propriety, any regard should be paid to the close of a line. On the stage, indeed, where the appearance of speaking in verse should be avoided, the close of such lines as make no pause in the sense, should not be rendered perceptible to the ear. On other occasions, it were better, for the sake of melody, to read blank verse in such a manner as to make each line sensibly distinct. In attempting this, however, every appearance of singsong and tone must be cautiously avoided. The close of the line where there is no pause in the meaning, should be marked by such a slight suspension of sound only, as may distinguish the passage from one line to another, without injuring the sense.

Upon what manner must pauses in public discourses be formed; and how is this illustrated? In all these cases, how is the speaker to regulate himself? In reading poetry, what two pauses are to be observed; and of rhyme and blank verse, what is relatively remarked? On the stage what course should be pursued; but on other occasions, how should blank verse be read? In attempting this, what must be avoided; and what remark follows?

The pause in the middle of the line falls after the 4th, 5th, 6th, or 7th, syllables, and no other. When it happens that this pause coincides with the slightest division in the sense, the line can be read with ease; as in the first two verses of Pope's *Messiah* :

Ye nymphs of Solyma! begin the song;
To heavenly themes, sublimer strains belong.

But if it happen that words, which have such an intimate connection as not to admit of even a momentary separation, be divided from each other by this pause in the middle of the verse, we then perceive a conflict between the sense and the sound, which renders it difficult to read such lines with grace and harmony. In such cases, it is always better to sacrifice sound to sense. Thus, for instance, in the following line of Milton :

————— What in me is dark
Illume; what is low, raise and support.

The sense evidently dictates the pause after 'illumine,' which ought to be observed; though if the melody only were to be regarded, 'illumine' should be connected with what follows, and no pause be made till after the 4th or 6th syllable.

We proceed next to treat of tones in pronunciation, which are different both from emphases and pauses; consisting in the modulation of the voice, the notes or variations of sound which are employed in public speaking. The most material instruction which can be given on this subject is, to form the tones of public speaking upon the tones of sensible and animated conversation. Every one who is engaged in speaking on a subject which interests him really, has an eloquent or persuasive tone and manner. But when a speaker departs from his natural tone of expression, he is sure to render his discourse frigid and unpersuasive. Nothing is more absurd than to suppose, that as soon as a speaker ascends the pulpit, or rises in a public assembly, he is immediately

The pause in the middle of the line falls after what syllables; when can the line be read with ease; and what instance is given? But when do we perceive a conflict between the sense and the sound; then, what course should we pursue; and what illustration follows? What is remarked of this passage? To what do we next proceed; and of what do they consist? What is the most material instruction that can be given on this subject; and what remark follows? When a speaker departs from his natural tone of expression, what will be the consequence; and what is very absurd? Of this what is observed; and what remarks follow?

to lay aside the voice with which he expresses himself in private, and to assume a new, studied tone, and a cadence altogether different from his natural manner. This has vitiated all delivery, and has given rise to cant and tedious monotony. Let every public speaker guard against this error. Whether he speak in private, or in a great assembly, let him not forget that he still speaks. Let him take nature for his guide, and she will teach him to express his sentiments and feelings in such a manner, as to make the most forcible and pleasing impression upon the minds of his hearers.

It now remains for us to treat of gesture, or what is called action, in public discourse. The best rule is, to recommend attention to the looks and gestures, in which earnestness, indignation, compassion, or any other emotion, discovers itself to most advantage in the common intercourse of men; and let these be the model for imitation. A public speaker must, however, adopt that manner which is most natural to himself. His motions and gestures ought all to exhibit that kind of expression which nature has dictated to him; and unless this be the case, no study can prevent their appearing stiff and ungraceful. But though nature be the basis on which every grace in gesture and action must be founded, yet the ornamental improvements which art can supply must not be neglected. The study of action consists chiefly in guarding against awkward and disagreeable emotions, and in learning to perform such as are natural to the speaker, in the most graceful manner. Numerous are the rules which writers have laid down for the attainment of a proper gesticulation. But it is to be feared, that written instructions on this subject can be of little service. To become useful, they must be well exemplified. A few of the simplest precepts, however, may be attended to with advantage. Thus, every speaker should study to preserve as much dignity as possible in the whole attitude of his body. He should generally prefer an erect posture; his position should be firm, so as to have the fullest and freest command of all his

Of what does it now remain for us to treat; and here what is the best rule? What manner, however, must a public speaker adopt; and of his gesture, what is observed? But though nature be the basis, yet what must not be neglected; and in what does the study of action consist? Of rules, what remarks follow? Of the simple precepts to be attended to, what ones are mentioned? Of the countenance, what is remarked; and also of the eyes?

motions ; if any inclination be used, it should be forward towards the hearers, which is a natural expression of earnestness. The countenance should correspond with the nature of the discourse ; and when no particular emotion is expressed, a serious and manly look is always to be preferred. The eyes should never be fixed entirely on any one object, but move easily round the audience. In the motions made with the hands, consists the principal part of gesture in speaking. It is natural that the right hand be more frequently employed than the left. Warm emotions require the exercise of them both together. But whether a speaker gesticulates with one or both hands, all his motions should be easy and unrestrained. Perpendicular movements in a straight line up and down, which Shakspeare calls 'Sawing the air with the hand,' are to be particularly avoided. Oblique motions are the most pleasing and graceful. For sudden and rapid motions are seldom good. Earnestness can be fully expressed without their assistance.

We cannot conclude our observations on this subject, without earnestly admonishing every speaker to guard against all affectation, which is the destruction of good delivery. Let his manner, whatever it may be, be his own. Whatever is native, though attended by several defects, is likely to please ; because it shows us the man ; and because it has the appearance of proceeding from the heart. To attain a delivery extremely correct and graceful, is what few can expect ; as so many natural talents must concur in its formation. But to acquire a forcible and persuasive manner, is within the power of the generality of mankind. They must only unlearn false and corrupt habits ; they must follow nature ; and they will speak in public as they do in private, when they speak in earnest, and from the heart.

What is observed of the motion of the hands ? Of perpendicular motions, what is remarked ; and what follows ? Against what is every speaker admonished to guard ? What should his manner be ; and why ? What can few expect ; and why ? But what is within the power of all ; and to attain it what must they do ?

ANALYSIS.

Delivery.

1. Audibleness of voice.
2. Distinctness of articulation.
3. Propriety of pronunciation.
4. Requisites for speaking.
 - A. Emphasis.

B. Pauses.

- a. Emphatical pause.
- b. Casual pause.

C. Tones.

D. Gestures.

- a. Affectation to be avoided.

LECTURE XXXI.

MEANS OF IMPROVING IN ELOQUENCE.

HAVING treated fully of the different kinds of public speaking, of the composition, and of the delivery of a discourse; before we finish this subject, it may be useful to suggest some things concerning the proper means of improvement in the art of public speaking, and the most necessary studies for that purpose.

To be an eloquent speaker, in the proper sense of the word, is far from being either a common or an easy attainment. To compose a florid harangue on some popular topic, and to deliver it so as to amuse an audience, it is true, is not a very difficult task. But though some praise be due to this, yet the idea which we have given of eloquence is much higher. It is a great exertion of the human powers. It is the art of being persuasive and commanding—the art, not of pleasing the fancy merely, but of speaking both to the understanding and to the heart—of interesting the hearers in such a degree, as to seize and carry them along with us; and to leave them with a deep and strong impression of what we have said. Many talents, both natural and acquired, must concur for carrying this to perfection. A strong, lively, and warm imagination—quick sensibility of heart, joined with solid judgment, good sense, and presence of mind; all improved by long attention to style and composition; and supported also by the exterior, yet important qualifications of a graceful manner, a good presence, and a full and tuneable voice. There is little reason to wonder, therefore, that an accomplished orator is so rarely to be found. But we should not, however, despair; as between mediocrity and perfection, there is a very wide interval. There are many intermediate spaces, which may be filled up with honor;

Having treated fully of the different kinds of public speaking, to suggest some things towards what may be useful? To be an eloquent speaker, in the proper sense of the word, is far from being what; and what remark follows? But though some praise be due to this, yet what is the idea we have given of eloquence? For carrying this to perfection, what talents must combine? About what, therefore, is there little reason to wonder; but why should we not despair?

and the more rare and difficult that complete perfection is, the greater is the honor of approaching to it, though we do not fully attain it.

After these preliminary observations, we proceed to treat of the means to be used for improving in eloquence. To those who are anxious to excel in this subject, we must observe, in the first place, that nothing is more necessary than to cultivate habits of the several virtues, and to refine and improve all their moral feelings. A true orator must possess generous sentiments, and a mind turned towards the admiration of all those great and high objects, which mankind are, by nature, prone to venerate. Connected with the manly virtues, he should have a strong and tender sensibility to all the injuries, distresses, and sorrows, of his fellow-creatures; a heart that can easily relent; that can enter into the circumstances of others, and can make their case his own.

Next to moral qualifications, what, in the second place, is most necessary to an orator, is a fund of knowledge. There is no art by which eloquence can be taught, in any sphere, without a sufficient acquaintance with what belongs to that sphere. Attention to the ornaments of style, can only assist the orator in setting off to advantage the stock of materials which he possesses; but the materials themselves must be derived from other sources than from rhetoric. The pleader must make himself completely acquainted with the law; he must possess all that learning and experience which can be useful in his profession, for supporting a cause, or convincing a judge. The preacher must apply himself closely to the study of divinity, of practical religion, of morals, and of human nature; that he may be rich in all the subjects both of instruction and of persuasion. He who wishes to excel as a member of the supreme council of the nation, or of any public assembly, should be minutely acquainted with the business which belongs to such assembly, and should attend with accuracy to all the facts which may be the subject of question or deliberation.

Besides the knowledge that is more particularly connected

After these preliminary observations, of what do we proceed to treat, and what is the first given? What must a true orator possess; and connected to the manly virtues, what should he have? What, in the second place, is necessary; and why? How is this remark illustrated from the case of the pleader, the preacher, or any other public speaker? Besides particular knowledge, with what should a public speaker make himself acquainted?

with his profession, a public speaker should make himself acquainted with the general circle of polite literature. Poetry he will find useful for the embellishment of style, for affording lively images, or pleasing illusions. History may be still more advantageous; since the knowledge of facts, of eminent characters, and of the course of human affairs, must find place on many occasions. A deficiency of knowledge, even in subjects not immediately connected with his profession, will expose a public speaker to many disadvantages, and give his rivals, who are better qualified, a decided superiority.

In the third place, to every one who wishes to excel in public speaking, a habit of application and industry cannot be too much recommended. This is inseparably connected with the attainment of every species of excellence. No one can ever become a distinguished pleader, or preacher, or speaker in any assembly, without previous labor and application. Industry, indeed, is not only necessary to every valuable acquisition, but it is designed by Providence as the seasoning of every pleasure, without which life would become flat and insipid. No enemy is so destructive both to honorable attainments, and to the real and animated enjoyment of life, as that relaxed state of mind which proceeds from indolence and dissipation. He who is destined to excel in any art, will be distinguished by an enthusiasm for that art; which firing his mind with the object in view, will dispose him to endure every necessary degree of industry and perseverance. This was the characteristic of the great men of antiquity; and it must distinguish the moderns who would imitate their bright examples. By those who are studying oratory, this honorable enthusiasm should be cultivated with the most lively attention. If it be wanting to youth, manhood will flag exceedingly.

In the fourth place, attention to the best models will contribute greatly towards improvement in the arts of speaking or writing. Every one, indeed, should endeavor to have

For what will he find poetry useful; and why may history be still more advantageous; and what remark follows? In the third place, a habit of what is recommended; and of this what is remarked? Of industry, what is farther observed; and what remark follows? By what will he who is destined to excel in any art, be distinguished; and what will be its effect? Of whom was this the characteristic; whom must it distinguish; and what remarks follow? To what, in the fourth place, must attention be given? What should every one endeavor to have; and why?

something that is his own, that is peculiar to himself, and that distinguishes his composition and style. Genius is certainly depressed, and its poverty betrayed, by a slavish imitation. But yet, there is no genius so original, but may receive improvement from proper examples, in style, composition, and delivery. They always afford some new ideas, and contribute to enlarge and correct our own. They accelerate the current of thought, and excite the ardor of emulation.

In imitating the style of any favorite author, a material distinction should be observed between written and spoken language. These are, in reality, two different modes of communicating ideas. In books, we expect correctness, precision, all redundancies pruned, all repetitions avoided, and language completely polished. Speaking allows a more easy copious style, and less confined by rule; repetitions may often be requisite, parenthesis may sometimes be ornamental; the same thought must often be exhibited in different points of view; since the hearers can catch it only from the mouth of the speaker, and have not the opportunity, as in reading, of turning back again, and of contemplating what they do not entirely comprehend. Hence the style of some good authors would seem stiff, affected, and even obscure, if transferred into a popular oration. How unnatural, for instance, would Lord Shaftesbury's sentences sound in the mouth of a public speaker. Some kinds of public discourse, indeed, such as that of the pulpit, where a more accurate preparation and a more studied style are allowable, would admit such a manner better than others, which are expected to approach nearer to extemporaneous speaking. But yet there is, generally, so great a difference between speaking, and a composition intended only to be read, as should caution us against a close and improper imitation.

The manner of writing of some authors, approaches nearer to the style of speaking than others; and they can, therefore, be imitated with more propriety. In our own

Yet from what may any genius, however original, receive improvement; and what is their effect? In imitating the style of any favorite author, between what should a distinction be observed; and how is this distinction fully illustrated? Hence, of the style of some good authors, what is observed; and what instance is mentioned? In what kinds of public discourse is such a manner admissible; and why? Yet why should we avoid a close and improper imitation? Of the manner of writing of some authors, what is remarked; and who are of this description?

language, Swift and Bolingbroke are of this description. The former, though correct, preserves the easy and natural manner of an unaffected speaker; and this is an excellence by which he is peculiarly distinguished. The style of the latter is more splendid; but still it is the style of speaking, or rather of declamation. Bolingbroke, indeed, may be studied with singular advantage, by those who are desirous of attaining the natural elegance and the graces of composition.

In the fifth place, besides attention to the best models, frequent exercise both in composing and speaking must be recommended as a necessary means of improvement. That kind of composition is, undoubtedly, most useful, which is connected with the profession, or sort of public speaking, to which persons devote themselves. This they should ever keep in view, and be gradually habituating themselves to it. At the same time, they should be cautious not to allow themselves to compose negligently on any occasion. He who wishes to write, or to speak correctly, should, in the most trifling kind of composition—in writing a letter, or even in common conversation, endeavor to express himself with propriety. By this we do not mean that he is never to write, or to speak, but in studied and artificial language. This would introduce a stiffness and affectation, infinitely worse than the greatest negligence. But we must observe, that there is in every thing a proper and becoming manner; and, on the contrary, there is also an awkward performance of the same thing. That manner which is becoming, is often the most light, and apparently the most careless; but taste and attention are requisite to possess the just idea of it. That idea, when once acquired, should be kept constantly in view, and upon it should be formed whatever we write or speak.

Exercises of speaking have always been recommended to students in elocution; and, when under proper regulation, must, undoubtedly, be of the greatest use. Those public

Of them, respectively, what is farther observed; and by whom may Bolingbroke be studied with singular advantage? In the fifth place, what must be recommended; and what kind of composition is most useful? Of this what is remarked; and at the same time, about what should they be cautious? What should he who wishes to write or to speak correctly do; by this, what is not meant; and why? But what must we observe; and of that manner which is becoming, what is remarked? What have always been recommended to students of elocution; and what is said of them? What institutions are not only of a useless, but of an injurious nature; and what are they calculated to become?

and pernicious societies, in which numbers are brought together, who are frequently of low stations and occupations, who are connected by no common bond of union, except a ridiculous rage for public speaking, and have no other object in view, than to exhibit their supposed talents, are institutions not only of a useless, but of an injurious nature. They are calculated to become seminaries of licentiousness, petulance, and faction. Even the allowable meetings, into which students of oratory may form themselves, must be under proper direction, in order to be rendered useful. If the subjects of debate be improperly chosen; if they support extravagant and indecent topics; if they indulge themselves in loose and flimsy declamation; or accustom themselves, without preparation, to speak pertly on all subjects, they will unavoidably acquire a very faulty and vicious taste in speaking. It should, therefore, be recommended to all those who are members of such societies, to attend to the choice of their subjects; to be careful that these be useful and manly, either connected with the course of their studies, or related to morals and taste, to action and life. They should be temperate in the practice of speaking; not to speak too frequently, nor on subjects of which they are ignorant; but only when they have laid up proper materials for a discourse, and have previously considered and digested the subject. In speaking, they should be cautious always to keep good sense and persuasion in view, rather than a show of eloquence. By these means, they will adopt the best method of forming themselves gradually to a manly, correct, and persuasive elocution.

It may now be asked, of what use the study of critical and rhetorical writers will be, for the improvement of those who wish to excel in eloquence. They ought certainly not to be neglected; and yet, perhaps, very much cannot be expected from them. It is, however, from the original ancient writers that the greatest advantage can be derived; and every one, whose profession calls him to speak in public, should be

Under what circumstances will students of oratory, even in allowable meetings, acquire a vicious taste in speaking? What should, therefore, be recommended to all the members of such societies? Of their speaking what is remarked; and by this what is meant? In speaking what should they do; and why? What question may now be asked; and what remark follows? Whence can the greatest advantage be derived; and who should be acquainted with them?

acquainted with them. In all the rhetorical writers among the ancients, there is, indeed, one defect; they are too systematical, they endeavor to perform too much; they aim at reducing rhetoric to a perfect art, which may supply invention with materials on every subject; so that one would suppose they expected to make an orator by rule, in the same manner as a mechanic would learn his business. But, in reality, all that can be done, is to assist and enlighten taste, and to point out to genius, the path in which it ought to tread.

Aristotle seems to have been the first who took rhetoric out of the hands of the sophists, and founded it on reason and solid sense. Some of the profoundest things that have been written on the passions and manners of men, are to be found in his Treatise on Rhetoric; though in this, as in all his writings, his great conciseness often renders him obscure. The Greek rhetoricians who succeeded him, most of whose writings are now lost, improved on the foundation which he had laid. The writings of two of them still remain—Demetrius Phalereus, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, both of whom have written on the construction of sentences, and deserve to be perused; especially Dionysius, who is a very accurate and judicious critic.

To recommend the rhetorical writings of Cicero, would be superfluous. Whatever, on the subject of eloquence, comes from so great an orator, must be worthy of attention. His most considerable work on this subject is that of *De Oratore*, in three books. None of his writings are more highly finished than this treatise. The dialogue is politely conducted, the characters are well supported, and the management of the whole is beautiful and pleasing. It is, it is true, full of digressions, and his rules and observations may be thought, sometimes, too vague and general. Useful things, however, may be learned from it; and it is no small advantage to be made acquainted with Cicero's own idea of eloquence. The *Orator ad M. Brutum*, is also a valuable treatise; and, indeed, throughout all Cicero's rhetorical

In all of them, what defect is there; from which one would suppose that they expected what? But what, in reality, is all that can be done? Aristotle is the first that did what; and of his Treatise on Rhetoric, what is remarked? Of the Greek rhetoricians who succeeded him, what is observed; the writings of what two still remain; and what is observed of them? What is said of the rhetorical writings of Cicero; and of his most considerable work on this subject, what is remarked?

works, there are seen those elevated and sublime ideas of eloquence, which are well calculated to form a just taste, and to inspire that enthusiasm for the art, which is highly conducive to the attainment of excellence.

But of all the ancient writers on the subject of oratory, the most instructive and most useful is Quintilian. Few books abound more with good sense, and discover a greater degree of just and accurate taste, than his *Institutions*. Almost all the principles of good criticism are to be found in them. He has digested into excellent order all the ancient ideas concerning rhetoric; and is, at the same time, himself an eloquent writer. Though some parts of his work contain too much of the technical and artificial system then in vogue, yet seldom has any person, of more sound and distinct judgment than Quintilian, applied himself to the study of the art of oratory.

But of all the ancient writers on oratory, who is the most instructive? What is observed of his *Institutions*? What objection may be offered to some parts of his work; yet of him, what remark follows?

ANALYSIS.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Preliminary observations. | a. Written and spoken language distinguished. |
| 2. Requisites for being eloquent. | E. Frequent exercise in composition. |
| A. Virtuous habits. | a. Exercises of speaking. |
| B. A fund of knowledge. | F. The study of critical writers, requisite. |
| a. Familiarity with general literature requisite. | a. Aristotle—Cicero. |
| C. Industry and application. | b. Quintilian. |
| D. Attention to the best models. | |

LECTURE XXXII.

COMPARATIVE MERIT OF THE ANCIENTS AND THE MODERNS.

As we have now finished that part of these lectures which respected oratory, or public speaking, it remains that we enter on the consideration of the most distinguished kinds of composition, both in prose and verse, and point out the principles of criticism relating to them. In this we shall study to avoid unnecessary prolixity; though, at the same time, we shall hope to omit nothing that is very material under the several heads.

Before we proceed farther, however, it may be proper to make some observations on the comparative merit of the ancients and the moderns; in order that we may be able to ascertain, rationally, upon what foundation that deference rests, which has so generally been paid to the ancients. These observations are the more necessary, as this subject has given rise to no small controversy in the republic of letters; and they may, with propriety, be introduced now, as they will serve to throw light on some things, afterwards to be said, concerning different kinds of composition.

It is a remarkable phenomenon, that writers and artists, most distinguished for their parts and genius, have generally appeared in considerable numbers at a time. Some ages have been remarkably barren in them; while, at other periods, nature seems to have exerted herself with a more than ordinary effort, and to have poured them forth with a profuse fertility. Various reasons have been assigned for this. Some of the moral causes lie obvious; such as favorable circumstances of government and manners; encouragement from great men; and emulation excited among the men of genius. But as these have been thought inadequate to the whole effect, physical causes have been also assigned; such

Having finished that part of these lectures which respected oratory, what remains to be done; and of this what remark follows? Before we proceed farther, however, what may be proper; and why? Why are these observations the more necessary; and why may they be introduced now? What is a remarkable phenomenon; and what remark follows? What moral, and what physical causes, have been assigned for this?

as the influence of the air, the climate, and other natural causes. But whatever the cause may be, the fact is certain, that particular periods or ages of the world, have been much more distinguished than others, for the extraordinary productions of genius.

Learned men have distinguished four of these happy ages. The first is the Grecian age, which commenced near the time of the Peloponnesian war, and extended till the time of Alexander the Great; within which period we have, as the most distinguished, Herodotus,* Thucydides, Xenophon, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Demosthenes, Æschines, Isocrates, Homer,* Hesiod,* Pindar, Æschylus, Euripides, Sophocles, Aristophanes, Menander, Theocritus, Lysippus, and Phidias. The second, is the Roman age, included nearly within the days of Julius Cæsar and Augustus; affording us Catullus, Lucretius, Terence, Virgil, Horace, Tibullus, Ovid, Lucan, Hortentius, Cæsar, Cicero, Livy, Sallust, Tacitus, and Varro. The third age, is that of the restoration of learning, under the Popes Julius II. and Leo X.; when flourished Dante,* Petrarch,* Ariosto, Tasso, Sannazarius, Vida, Machiavel, Guicciardini, Davila, Erasmus, Paul Jovius, Michael Angelo, Raphael, and Titian. The fourth commenced with the age of Louis XIV. and Queen Anne, and continues to the present time. In it have flourished, in France, Corneille, Racine, De Retz, Moliere, Boileau, Fontaine, Baptiste, Rousseau, Bossuet, Fenelon, Bourdaloue, Pascall, Malebranche, Massillon, Bayle, and Fontenelle; in England, Shakspeare, Spenser, Dryden, Pope, Addison, Prior, Swift, Parnell, Arbuthnot, Congreve, Otway, Young, Howe, Atterbury, Shaftesbury, Bolingbroke, Tillotson, Temple, Boyle, Locke, Newton, Clark; together with Johnson, Burke, and all their brilliant cotemporaries, and successors, down to the present day.

When we speak comparatively of the ancients and the moderns, we generally mean by the ancients, such as lived

* These writers flourished rather before the period with which their names are connected.

But whatever the cause may be, what fact is certain? How many of these happy ages have been distinguished; of the first what is remarked; and in it who flourished? What is the second; within whose days is it included; and who does it afford? Under whom was the third age; and in it who flourished? When did the fourth commence; of it what is observed; and in it who flourished? When we speak comparatively of the ancients and the moderns, by them, respectively, what do we mean?

in the first two of these periods ; and by the moderns, those who flourished in the two last. Any comparison between these two classes of writers, must necessarily be vague and loose, as they comprehend so many, and such different kinds and degrees of genius. The comparison, however, is generally made to turn upon two or three of the most distinguished in each class. In France, this dispute was carried on with much warmth, between Boileau and Madame Dacier for the ancients, and Perrault and La Motte for the moderns. Even at this time, men of letters are divided on the subject ; and it is somewhat difficult to discern, upon what grounds the controversy is to be determined.

Should any one, at this day, attempt to decry the ancient classics, or pretend to have discovered that Homer and Virgil are inferior poets, and that Demosthenes and Cicero are not great orators, we unhesitatingly tell him that he is too late in his discovery. Their reputation is established upon a foundation too solid to be now shaken by any argument whatever ; for it is established upon the universal taste of mankind, proved and tried throughout the succession of so many ages. At the same time, it is obvious that imperfections may be traced in their writings ; for no human work is perfect. But to attempt to discredit their works in general, or to prove that the reputation which they have gained is, on the whole, unjust, can only belong to peevishness or prejudice. The approbation of the public, for so many centuries, establishes a verdict in their favor, from which there is no appeal.

In matters of mere reasoning, the world may be long in an error ; and may be convinced of the error by stronger reasonings when produced. Positions that depend upon science, upon knowledge, and matters of fact, may be overturned according as science and knowledge are enlarged, and new matters of fact are brought to light. For this reason, a system of philosophy receives no sufficient sanction

Of any comparison between these two classes of writers, what is remarked ; and why ? On whom has the comparison been generally made to turn ; by whom has the dispute been carried on ; and what remark follows ? When may we unhesitatingly tell that he has come too late with his discovery ; and of their reputation what is remarked ? At the same time, what is obvious ; but what can only belong to peevishness and prejudice ; and what remark follows ? Of matters of mere reasoning, what is observed ; and how is this illustrated ?

for its antiquity or long standing. But in objects of taste there is no such fallibility ; as they depend not on knowledge and science, but upon sentiment and feeling. It is in vain to think of undeceiving mankind, with respect to errors committed here, as in philosophy ; for the universal feeling of mankind is the natural feeling, and, therefore, must be right. Homer and Virgil, consequently, must continue to occupy the same ground that they have occupied so long.

It is in vain also to alledge, that the reputation of the ancient poets, and orators, is owing to authority, to pedantry, and to the prejudices of education, transmitted from age to age. These, it is true, are the authors put into our hands at schools and colleges, and by that means a strong prepossession is formed in their favor ; but then it must be recollected, that it was through the high fame which they had acquired among their cotemporaries, that they gained the possession of colleges and schools. The Greek and Latin were not always dead languages. There was a time when Homer, and Virgil, and Horace, were viewed in the same light as we now view Dryden, and Pope, and Addison. It is not to commentators and universities that the classics are indebted for their fame. They became classics and school-books, in consequence of the high admiration which was paid them by the best judges in their own country and nation. Accordingly we find, that as early as the days of Juvenal, Virgil and Hórace had become standard books in the education of youth.

We must guard, however, against a blind and implicit veneration for the ancients in every thing. The general principle thus opened, must go far in instituting a fair comparison between them and the moderns. Whatever superiority the ancients may have had in point of genius, yet in all arts, where the natural progress of knowledge has had room to produce any considerable effects, the moderns cannot but have some advantage. Hence, in natural philosophy, astronomy, chemistry, and other sciences that depend on an

But why, in objects of taste, is there no such fallibility ; and of Homer and Virgil what is, consequently, remarked ? What is it in vain also to alledge ; of these what is observed ; and how did they gain possession of colleges and schools ? As the Greek and Latin were not always dead languages, what follows ? How did they become classics and school books ; and, accordingly, what do we find ? Against what must we, however, guard ; and what remark follows ? Though the ancients were superior in point of genius, yet, in what have the moderns the advantage ; and as instances, what sciences are mentioned ?

extensive knowledge and observation of facts, modern philosophers have an unquestionable superiority over the ancients. Perhaps, too, in precise reasoning, the philosophers of the modern ages have the advantage over those of ancient times; as a more extensive literary intercourse, has contributed to sharpen the faculties of men. Perhaps, also, the moderns have the superiority in history; as political knowledge is certainly more perfect now, than it was in the days of Greece and Rome—arising from the extension of commerce, the discovery of different countries, the superior facility of intercourse, and the multiplicity of events and revolutions which have taken place in the world. In the more complex kinds of poetry, likewise, some advantages have been gained, in point of regularity and accuracy. In dramatic performances, having the advantage of the ancient models, we have made very considerable improvements. The variety of the characters is greater; more skill has been displayed in the conduct of the plot; and a happier attention given to probability and decorum. Among the ancients we find higher conceptions, greater simplicity, and more original fancy. Among the moderns, sometimes, more art and correctness, but genius less forcible and striking. But, though this be, in general, a mark of distinction between the ancients and the moderns, yet, it must be understood with some exceptions; for in point of poetical fire and original genius, Milton and Shakspeare are inferior to no poets in any age.

It is proper to observe, that among the ancients there were some circumstances that were very favorable to the exertions of genius. Learning was a much more rare and singular attainment in the early ages than it is at present. It was not to schools and universities that the persons applied, who sought to distinguish themselves. They had not this easy recourse. They travelled for their improvement into distant countries, to Egypt, and to the East. They inquired after all the monuments of learning there. They conversed with

In precise reasoning, and in history, why have the moderns a superiority over the ancients? In what kinds of poetry have the moderns gained some advantages; and how is this remark illustrated from dramatic performances? Among the ancients and the moderns, respectively, what do we find? But though this be a general mark of distinction, yet, what exceptions are mentioned? Among the ancients, what circumstances are mentioned as having been favorable to the exertions of genius? How did they obtain their learning; and of their return to their own country, what is remarked?

priests, philosophers, poets, and all who had acquired any distinguished fame. They returned to their own country full of the discoveries which they had made, and fired by the new and uncommon objects which they had seen. Their knowledge and improvements cost them more labor, raised in them more enthusiasm, and were attended with higher rewards and honors, than in modern days. Fewer had the means and opportunities of distinguishing themselves; but such as did distinguish themselves, were sure of acquiring that fame, and even veneration, which is, of all rewards, the greatest incentive to genius. Herodotus read his history to all Greece, assembled at the Olympic games, and was publicly crowned. In the Peloponnesian war, when the Athenian army was defeated in Sicily, and the prisoners were ordered to be put to death, such of them as could repeat any verses of Euripides were saved, from honor to that poet, who was a citizen of Athens. These were testimonies of public regard, far beyond what any modern nation confers upon genius.

In modern times, good writing is considered as an attainment neither so difficult, nor so high and meritorious.

Scribimus indocti, doctique, Poëmata passim.

Now every desperate blockhead dares to write;
Verse is the trade of ev'ry living wight.

Francis.

We write much more supinely, and at our ease, than the ancients did. To excel has become a much less considerable object. Less effort, less exertion, is required, because our assistances are much more numerous than theirs were. Printing has rendered all books common, and easy to be had. Education for any of the learned professions, can be carried on without much trouble. Hence a mediocrity of genius prevails. To rise beyond this, and to surpass the crowd, is the happy pre-eminence of but a few. The numerous assistances which we enjoy for all kinds of composition,

Of their knowledge and improvements, what is farther observed; and though fewer had the means of distinguishing themselves, yet what is said of those that did? In the case of Herodotus, how is this remark illustrated; what other instance of illustration is given; and what remark follows? What is remarked of good writing in modern times; and what illustration follows? What is farther remarked of the manner in which we write, in comparison with the ancients; and what reasons are assigned for this? Hence what prevails; and what follows? What is the effect of the numerous assistances which we enjoy in all kinds of composition; and on this subject, what passage is given from Sir William Temple?

in the opinion of Sir William Temple, rather depresses than favors the exertions of native geniùs. 'It is very possible,' says that ingenious author, 'that men may lose rather than gain by these; may lessen the force of their own genius, by forming it upon that of others; may have less knowledge of their own, for contenting themselves with that of those before them. So a man that only translates, shall never be a poet; so people that trust to others charity, rather than their own industry, will be always poor. Who can tell,' he adds, 'whether learning may not even weaken invention, in a man that has great advantages from nature! Whether the weight and number of so many other men's thoughts and notions may not suppress his own; as heaping on wood sometimes suppresses a little spark, that would otherwise have grown into a flame? The strength of mind, as well as of body, grows more from the warmth of exercise than of clothes; nay, too much of this foreign heat, rather makes men faint, and their constitutions weaker than they would be without them.'

From whatever cause it arises, it is evident that among some of the ancient writers, we must look for the highest models in most kinds of elegant composition. For accurate thinking and enlarged ideas, in several parts of philosophy, to the moderns we ought chiefly to have recourse. Of correct and finished writing in some works of taste, also, they may afford useful patterns; but for all that belongs to original genius, to spirited, masterly, and high execution, our best and most happy ideas are, generally speaking, drawn from the ancients. In epic poetry, for instance, we are still, perhaps, unrivalled; and modern times have produced no orator, who can be compared with Demosthenes and Cicero. In history we have no modern narration that is so elegant, so picturesque, and so animated, as those of Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Livy, Tacitus, and Sallust. Our dramas, with all the improvements they have received, are inferior in poetry and sentiment, to those of Sophocles and Euripides; and we have no dialogue in comedy, that equals the correct, graceful, and elegant simplicity of Terence. We have no such love elegies as those

From whatever cause it arises, for what must we look among some of the ancient writers? For what must we have recourse to the moderns; and in what also, may they afford useful patterns; but what follows? How is this last remark illustrated from epic poetry, oratory, history, the drama, love elegies, pastoral, and lyric poetry?

of Tibullus; no such pastorals as those of Theocritus; and for lyric poetry, Horace stands quite unrivalled. By all such, therefore, as wish to form their taste and nourish their genius, the utmost attention must be devoted to the ancient classics of both Greece and Rome.

Nocturnâ versate manu, versate diurnâ.

Read them by day, and study them by night.

After having made these observations on the ancients and the moderns, it may be proper to treat critically of the more distinguished kinds of composition, and of the characters of those writers, whether ancient or modern, who have excelled in them. Of orations and public discourses, much has already been said. The remaining prose compositions may be divided into historical writing, philosophical writing, epistolary writing, and fictitious history. Historical composition shall be first considered; and, as it is an object of dignity, we purpose to treat it at some length.

To whom is the study of them, therefore, recommended? After these observations, what may be proper? Of what has much already been said; and what remarks follow?

ANALYSIS.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. The ancients and the moderns compared.
A. Remarkable phenomenon.
a. Four of these happy ages.
B. The ancient classics not to be decried.
a. Not indebted for their celebrity to schools. | C. The ancients not to be blindly venerated.
D. Favorable circumstances of ancient times.
E. Good writing now not so difficult.
F. Concluding remarks. |
|---|---|

LECTURE XXXIII.

HISTORICAL WRITING.

As it is the office of an orator to persuade, so it is that of an historian to record truth for the instruction of mankind. This is the proper object and end of history ; and if this object were always kept in view, it would prevent many of those errors into which we are liable to fall concerning this species of composition. As the primary end of history is to record truth—impartiality, fidelity, and accuracy, are the fundamental qualities of an historian. He must neither enter into faction, nor indulge in affection : but, contemplating past events and characters with a cool and dispassionate eye, must present to his readers a faithful copy of human nature.

At the same time, it is not every record of facts, however true, that is entitled to the name of history ; but such records only, as enable us to apply the transactions of former ages for our own instruction. The facts ought to be momentous and important : represented in connection with their causes, traced to their effects, and unfolded in clear and distinct order. For history is designed to supply the place of experience. Though it enforce not its instructions with the same authority, yet it furnishes us a greater variety than it is possible for experience to afford, in the course of the longest life. Its object is to enlarge our views of the human character, and to give full exercise to our judgment on human affairs. It must not, therefore, be a tale, calculated to please only, and addressed to the fancy ; but gravity and dignity are its essential characteristics. The writer must sustain the character of a wise man, writing for the instruction of posterity—one who has studied to inform himself well—

As it is the office of the orator to persuade, so what is the office of the historian ; and of this object what is remarked ? What are the fundamental qualities of an historian ; and what remark follows ? At the same time, what record of facts only, is entitled to the name of history ? Of the facts themselves what is observed ; how should they be represented ; and why ? How does it compare with experience ; and what is its object ? What must it not, therefore, be ; and what character must the writer sustain ?

who has pondered his subject with care, and addresses himself to our judgment, rather than to our imagination.

In the conduct and management of his subject, the first attention requisite in an historian, is to give it as much unity as possible. His history should not consist of separate and unconnected parts. Its portions should be linked together by some connecting principle, which should produce in the mind the impression of something that is one, whole, and entire. It is inconceivable how great an effect this, when happily executed, has upon a reader; and it is surprising that some able writers of history have attended so little to it. Whether pleasure or instruction be the end sought by the study of history, either of them is enjoyed to much greater advantage, when the mind has always before it the progress of some one great plan or system of action; when there is some point or centre, to which the various facts related by the historian can be referred. In histories that record the affairs of a whole nation or empire throughout several ages, to preserve this unity is, necessarily, more difficult. Yet even here, some degree of it can, by a skillful writer, be still preserved. For though the whole, taken together, be very complex, yet the great constituent parts of it form so many subordinate wholes, when taken by themselves; each of which can be treated both as complete within itself, and as connected with what goes before and what follows. In the history of a monarchy, for instance, every reign should have its own unity—a beginning, a middle, and an end, to the system of affairs; while, at the same time, we are taught to discern how that system of affairs rose from the preceding, and how it is inserted in what follows. We should be able to trace all the secret links of the chain, which binds together remote, and seemingly unconnected events. Of all the ancient general historians, Polybius, though not in other respects an elegant writer, had the most correct idea of this quality of historical composition.

In the management of his subject, what is the first attention requisite in an historian; and how is this remark illustrated? Of the effect of this, what is remarked; and what is surprising? Whether pleasure or instruction be the end sought by the study of history, when is either of these enjoyed to the greater advantage? In what histories is it difficult to preserve this unity; yet what remark follows; and why is this the case? How is this illustrated in the history of a monarchy? What should we be able to do; and of Polybius, what is remarked?

Having considered the unity which belongs to this kind of composition, we next proceed to observe, that the author must study to trace to their source, the actions and events which he records. To do this successfully, he should be acquainted with human nature, and also possess a large share of political knowledge. His skill in the former will enable him to describe the characters of individuals; and his proficiency in the latter will prepare him for the task of recording revolutions of government; and for accounting for the operation of political causes on public affairs. With regard to political knowledge, the ancients wanted some advantages which the moderns enjoy. There was not, in ancient times, so free a communication among neighboring states, as there is at present. There prevailed no regular intercourse by established posts; and there were no ambassadors residing at distant courts. A larger experience, too, of the different modes of government, has improved the modern historian beyond the historian of antiquity.

We are by no means, however, to censure all the ancient historians as being defective in political information. No historians can be more instructive than Thucydides, Polybius, and Tacitus. Thucydides is grave, intelligent, and judicious; always attentive to give very exact information of what he relates; and to show the advantages or disadvantages of every plan that was proposed, and every measure that was pursued. Polybius excels in comprehensive political views, in penetration into great systems, and in his profound and distinct knowledge of all military affairs. Tacitus is eminent for his knowledge of the human heart; is sentimental and refined in a high degree; conveys much instruction with respect to political matters, but none with respect to human nature.

We next proceed to consider the proper qualities of historical narration; as in the form of this, and not by the affected mode of dissertation, is the historian to impart his political knowledge. Formal discussions expose him to the suspicion

After unity, what is next to be attended to by the historian; and to do this successfully, what is requisite? What will be the advantage of his skill in the former, and of his proficiency in the latter? With regard to political knowledge, what advantage have the moderns over the ancients? Why, however, are we not to censure all the ancient historians as being deficient in political information; and of Thucydides, Polybius, and Tacitus, respectively, what is remarked? What do we next proceed to consider; and why? Of formal discussions what is observed; and what remark follows?

of being willing to accommodate his facts to his theory. They have also an air of pedantry, and are an evident result of his want of art. For reflections, whether moral, political, or philosophical, may be insinuated into the body of the narration.

The first virtue of historical narration, is clearness, order, and due connection. To attain this, the historian must be completely master of his subject. He must see the whole as at one view; and comprehend the chain and dependance of all its parts, that he may introduce every thing in its proper place—that he may lead us smoothly along the tract of affairs which are recorded, and may give us the satisfaction of seeing how one event arises out of another. Without this there can be neither pleasure nor instruction in reading history. Much, for this end, will depend on the observance of unity in the general plan and conduct; and much, too, on the proper management of transactions, which forms one of the chief ornaments of this kind of writing, and is one of the most difficult in execution.

In the next place, as history is a very dignified species of composition, gravity must always be maintained in the narration. There should be nothing mean nor vulgar in the style; no quaint nor colloquial phrases; no affectation of pertness, nor of wit. The smart or the sneering manner of telling a story, is inconsistent with the historical character. We do not, however, pretend to say, that an historian is never to let himself down. He may sometimes do it with propriety, in order to diversify the strain of his narration, which, if it be perfectly uniform, is apt to become tiresome. But he must be careful not to descend too far.

As history must be read with pleasure to be read with profit, the great study of the historian should be to render his narration interesting. This is the quality that chiefly distinguishes the genius and eloquence of the writer. Two things are especially conducive to this: the first is, a just medium in the conduct of narration, between a rapid or crowded recital of facts, and a prolix detail. The former

What is the first virtue of historical narration; to attain this what is requisite; and why? For attaining this end, on what will much depend? In the next place, what must be always maintained in the narration; and how is this remark illustrated? What, however, do we not pretend to say; and why may he sometimes do this? What should be the great study of the historian; why; and of this quality what is remarked? What is the first thing that is conducive to this; and what is their effect?

embarrasses, and the latter tires us. An historian that would interest us, must know when to be concise, and when to enlarge; passing lightly over slight and unimportant events, but dwelling on such as are, in their nature, striking and important. The next thing he must attend to, is a proper selection of the circumstances belonging to those events which he chooses to relate fully. It is by means of these that a narration becomes interesting and affecting to the reader. These give life, body, and coloring, to the recital of facts, and enable us to behold them as present, and passing before our eyes. It is this employment of circumstances in narration, that is properly termed historical painting.

In all these qualities of history, and particularly in picturesque description, the ancients eminently excel. Hence the pleasure of reading Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Livy, Sallust, and Tacitus. Herodotus is always an agreeable writer, and relates every thing with that simplicity of manner that never fails to interest the reader. Though the manner of Thucydides be more harsh and dry, yet, on great occasions, such as the plague at Athens, or the defeat of the Athenians in Sicily, he displays a very strong and masterly power of description. Xenophon's *Cyropædia*, and his *Anabasis*, are extremely beautiful. The circumstances are finely selected, and the narration is easy and engaging. Sallust's *Art of Historical Painting* in his *Catilinarian* and *Jugurthine Wars*, is well known; though his style is liable to censure, being too studied and affected. Livy is more unexceptionable in his manner, and is excelled by no historian whatever in the art of narration. Tacitus, also, is eminent for historical painting, though in a manner altogether different from that of Livy. Livy's descriptions are more full, more plain, and natural; those of Tacitus consist in a few bold strokes. He selects one or two remarkable circumstances, and sets them before us in a strong, and, generally, in a new and uncommon light.

The ancients employed one embellishment of history which the moderns have laid aside. This was the putting of orations into the mouths of celebrated personages. By means

What must an historian that would interest us know, and do? What is the next thing to be attended to; and of these what is remarked? What is this properly termed? In all these qualities of history, who eminently excel; and hence what follows? Of them respectively, what is remarked? What embellishment of history did the ancients employ, which the moderns have laid aside; and by means of these, what did they effect?

of these, they diversified their history; they conveyed both moral and political instruction; and, by the opposite arguments which were employed, they gave us a view of the sentiments of different parties. Thucydides was the first who introduced this practice; and the orations with which his history abounds, are among the most valuable remains which we have of ancient eloquence. It is doubtful, however, whether this embellishment should be allowed to the historian: for they form a mixture that is unnatural, joining together truth and fiction. We know that these orations are entirely of the author's own composition, and that he has introduced some celebrated person haranguing in a public place, purely that he might have an opportunity of showing his own eloquence, or delivering his own sentiments, under the name of another. This is a sort of poetical liberty which does not suit the gravity of history, throughout which an air of the strictest truth should always reign. The moderns are, perhaps, more chaste, when, on great occasions, the historian delivers, in his own person, the sentiments and reasonings of opposite and contending factions.

Another splendid embellishment of historical composition, is the delineation of characters. These are generally considered professed exhibitions of fine writing; and an historian who seeks to shine in them, is frequently in danger of carrying refinement to excess, from a desire of appearing very profound and penetrating. A writer who would characterize in an instructive and masterly manner, should be simple in his style, and should avoid all quaintness and affectation: at the same time, he should not content himself with giving us general outlines only, but should descend into those peculiarities which mark a character in its strongest and most distinctive features.

As history is a species of composition designed for the instruction of mankind, sound morality should always reign in it. Both in describing characters, and in relating transactions, the author should always show himself to be

Who first introduced this practice; and of his orations what is remarked? Why, however, is it doubtful whether this embellishment should be allowed to the historian; and what remark follows? Of this, what is farther observed; and what course have the moderns pursued? What is another splendid embellishment of historical composition; how are these generally considered; and what follows? What is said of a writer who would characterize in a masterly manner? As history is designed for the instruction of mankind, what should reign in it; and what remark follows?

on the side of virtue. To deliver moral instructions in a formal manner, it is true, falls not within his province; but as a good man, we expect him to discover sentiments of respect for virtue, and of indignation at flagrant vice. To appear neutral and indifferent with respect to good and bad characters, derogates, greatly, from the weight of historical composition, and renders the strain of it cold and uninteresting. We are always most interested in passing transactions, when our sympathy is awakened by the story, and when we become engaged in the fate of the actors. But this effect can never be produced by a writer, who is deficient in sensibility and correct moral feeling.

In modern times, historical genius has shown forth with most lustre in Italy. The natural characters of the Italians, seems favorable to it. They are an acute, penetrating, reflecting people, remarkable for political sagacity, and addicted to the arts of writing. Accordingly, soon after the restoration of letters, Machiavel, Guicciardini, Davila, Bentivoglio, and Father Paul, became highly conspicuous for historical merit. Though they have their defects, yet they all appear to have conceived very just ideas of history; and are agreeable, instructing, and interesting writers. Among the French there has been much good historical writing; but they have produced no such historians as the Italians just mentioned. In Great Britain, history has not, until recently, been fashionable. For though the celebrated Buchanan of Scotland, and Lord Clarendon and Bishop Burnett, of England, are very considerable historians, yet they are far inferior to Hume, Robertson, and Gibbon. Of the latter, however, we are constrained to say, that, while his history is replete with the deepest interest, his irreligious sentiments are so pernicious, as to render it a dangerous work, in the hands of any youth, however well guarded.

The inferior kinds of historical composition are annals, memoirs, and lives. Annals are a collection of facts, according to chronological order: all that is required, therefore, of an annalist, is fidelity and distinctness. Memoirs

What falls not within his province; but what do we expect of him? What is the effect of appearing indifferent with regard to good or bad characters; why; and what remark follows? Of the historical genius of the Italians what is remarked; and accordingly what follows? What is farther observed of them; and also of the French? What is said of the historians of Great Britain; and what remark follows? Of the latter particularly, what is observed? What are the inferior kinds of historical composition; what is remarked of annals, and also of memoirs?

are a composition which pretends not to hold out a complete detail of the period to which it relates, but only to record what the author knows in his own person, or from particular information, concerning any certain object, transaction, or event. It is not, therefore, expected of such a writer, that he should possess that profound research, and those superior talents, which are requisite in an historian. It is chiefly required of him, that he should be lively and interesting. The French have put forth a flood of memoirs, the greater part of which are to be regarded as agreeable trifles. We must, however, exempt from this censure, the memoirs of the Cardinal de Retz, and those of the duke of Sully. The former join to a lively narrative, great knowledge of human nature. The latter deserves very particular praise. They approach to the dignity of legitimate history. They are full of virtue and good sense; and are well calculated to form both the heads and the hearts of those who are designed for high stations in the world.

The writing of lives, or biography, is a sort of composition less stately than history; but it is, perhaps, more instructive. It affords the full opportunities of displaying the characters of eminent men, and of entering into a thorough acquaintance with them. In this kind of writing Plutarch excels; but his matter is better than his manner; and he has no peculiar beauty or elegance. His judgment, too, and accuracy, are not to be highly commended. But he is a very humane writer, and fond of displaying great men in the gentle lights of retirement.

What is not expected of such a writer; and what is required of him? What is remarked of French memoirs; what are exceptions; and how is this illustrated? Of the writing of lives what is observed; and in this kind of composition, what is said of Plutarch?

ANALYSIS.

Historical writing.

1. Unity to be attended to.
2. Actions to be traced to their source.
 - A. Requisites for this.
3. The qualities of the narration.
 - A. Clearness, order, and connection.
 - B. Gravity to be preserved.

- C. The narrative to be interesting.
 - a. The ancients eminent in this.
 - D. Orations employed by the ancients.
 - E. Delineation of characters.
 - F. Sound morality indispensable.
4. Modern historians.
 5. *Annales*—memoirs—biography.

LECTURE XXXIV.

PHILOSOPHICAL WRITING—DIALOGUE—EPISTOLARY WRITING—FICTITIOUS HISTORY.

As the professed object of philosophy is to convey instruction, and as those who study it are supposed to do so for their improvement, and not for their entertainment, the style, the form, and the dress of such writings, are not very material objects. They are not, however, to be wholly neglected; for the same truths delivered in an elegant manner, will be much more effective than though they were delivered in a dry and uninteresting one.

In a philosophical writer, the strictest accuracy and precision are required. He must employ no word of uncertain meaning; and must avoid using words that may seem to be synonymous, without attending to the variations which they make upon the idea. But as he may do this, and still be a very dry writer, he must also study some degree of embellishment, in order to render his composition pleasing and graceful. One of the most agreeable, and, at the same time, one of the most useful embellishments that a philosopher can employ, consists in illustrations taken from historical facts, and the characters of men. All moral and political subjects naturally afford scope for these; and wherever there is room for employing them, they seldom fail to produce a happy effect. They diversify the composition, relieve the mind from the fatigue of mere reasoning, and, at the same time, give fuller conviction, than can otherwise possibly be produced.

Philosophical writing also admits of a polished, neat, and elegant style. It admits of metaphors, comparisons, and all the calm figures of speech, by which an author may convey his sense to the understanding with clearness and force, at

As the professed object of philosophy is to convey instruction, what follows; but why are they not to be wholly neglected? In an historical writer, what are required; and how is this illustrated? But as he may do this, and still be a dry writer, what follows? What is one of the most useful embellishments that a philosopher can employ; and what naturally afford scope for these? What is their effect? What style, and what figures, does philosophical writing admit; but of what must he be careful?

the same time that he entertains the imagination. He must be careful, however, that all his ornaments be of the chastest kind, never partaking of the florid or tumid; which is so unpardonable in a professed philosopher, that it is much better for him to err on the side of unadorned simplicity, than on that of too much ornament. Plato and Cicero have left philosophical treatises, composed with much elegance and beauty. Seneca, on the contrary, has been justly censured for the affectation of his style. He is too fond of a certain brilliant and sparkling manner—of antitheses and quaint sentences. In English, Mr. Locke's celebrated *Treatise on Human Understanding*, is a model of a clear and distinct philosophical style. The writings of Lord Shaftesbury, are dressed out with too much ornament and finery.

Philosophical writing sometimes assumes the form of dialogue. Under this form the ancients have given us some of their chief philosophical works; and several of the moderns have endeavored to imitate them. A dialogue on some philosophical, moral, or critical subject, when well executed, stands in a high rank among the works of taste; but the execution is very difficult; for it requires more than merely the introduction of different persons speaking in succession. It ought to be a natural and spirited representation of real conversation; exhibiting the character and manners of the several speakers, and suiting to the character of each, that peculiarity of thought and expression, which distinguishes him from another. A dialogue thus conducted, gives the reader a very agreeable entertainment; as by means of the debate going on among the personages, he receives a fair and full view of both sides of the argument, and is, at the same time, amused with polite conversation, and with a display of consistent and well supported characters.

Among the ancients, Plato is eminent for the beauty of his dialogues. In richness of imagination, no philosophical writer, either ancient or modern, is equal to him. His only

Of the philosophical writings of Plato and Cicero, and of those of Seneca, what is remarked? What is observed of Mr. Locke and Lord Shaftesbury? What form does philosophical writing sometimes assume; and what remark follows? What is remarked of a dialogue on some philosophical, moral, or critical subject; but why is the execution difficult? What ought it to be; what is said of a dialogue thus conducted; and why? Among the ancients, what is remarked of Plato; and what is his only fault?

fault is the excessive fertility of his imagination, which sometimes carries him into allegory, fiction, enthusiasm, and the airy regions of mystical theology. Cicero has also distinguished himself by his dialogues; but they are not so spirited and characteristic as those of Plato. They are, however, agreeable, and well supported; and show us how conversations were carried on among the principal persons of ancient Rome. Of the light and humorous dialogue, Lucian is an excellent model; and he has been imitated by many modern writers. Fontenelle has written dialogues which are sprightly and agreeable; but as for characters, whoever his personages are, they all become Frenchmen. The divine dialogues of Dr. Henry More, amidst academic stiffness, are often remarkable for character and vivacity. Bishop Berkeley's dialogues furnish an instance of a very abstract subject, rendered clear and intelligible by means of conversation properly managed.

We proceed next to treat of epistolary writing, which occupies a kind of middle place between serious and amusing composition. Epistolary writing appears, at first view, to stretch into a very wide field; for there is no subject on which one may not convey his thoughts to the public, in the form of a letter. Lord Shaftesbury, and several other writers, have chosen to give this form to philosophical treatises. But this is not sufficient to class them under the head of epistolary composition. Though they bear in the title page, a Letter to a Friend, yet after the first address, the friend disappears, and we see that it is, in truth, the public with whom the author corresponds. Where one writes a real letter on some formal topic, as of moral or religious consolation to a person under distress, he is at liberty to write wholly as a divine or as a philosopher, and to assume the style and manner of one, without reprehension. On such an occasion, we consider the author not as writing a letter, but as composing a discourse, suited particularly to the circumstances of some one person.

What is observed of Cicero's dialogues; of Lucian's; and also of Fontenelle's? Of the dialogues of Dr. Henry More, and of those of Bishop Berkeley, what is remarked? To what do we next proceed; and what is observed of it? Into what does epistolary writing appear, at first view, to stretch; and why? What have Lord Shaftesbury, and several other writers, done; but of these, what is remarked? When is one at liberty to write wholly as a divine, or as a philosopher; and on such occasions, what do we consider the author as writing?

EPISTOLARY WRITING. [LECT. 34.]

Epistolary writing becomes a distinct species of composition, when it is of the easy and familiar kind only—when it is conversation carried on upon paper between two minds at a distance. Much, therefore, of the merit of it will depend on its introducing us to some acquaintance with the writer. There, if any where, we look for the man, not for the author. Its first and fundamental requisite is, to be natural and simple; for a stiff and labored manner is as bad in a letter, as it is in conversation. This does not banish sprightliness and wit; for these, when they flow easily, and without being studied, are as graceful in letters as they are in conversation. Generally speaking, the best letters are those which are written with most facility. What the heart or the imagination dictates, always flows readily; but where there is no subject to warm or interest these, constraint appears; and hence those letters of mere compliment, congratulation, or affected condolence, never fail of being the most disagreeable and insipid to the readers. It must, however, be remembered, that the ease and simplicity here commended in epistolary correspondence, are not to be understood as importing entire carelessness. In writing to the most intimate friend, a certain degree of attention, both to the subject and to the style, is requisite and becoming. It is more than what we owe, both to ourselves, and to the friend with whom we correspond: for a slovenly and negligent manner is a mark of disrespect.

Pliny's letters form one of the most celebrated collections of epistles of ancient times. They are elegant and polite; and exhibit a very pleasing and amiable view of the author. But they smell too much of the lamp. They are too highly finished; and it is difficult to persuade oneself that the author is not casting an eye towards the public, when he is appearing to write for his friends only. Cicero's Epistles, though not so showy as those of Pliny, are much more valuable; indeed, they are the most valuable collection of letters extant in any language. They are composed with

When does epistolary writing become a distinct species of composition; and on what, therefore, will much of the merit of it depend? What is its fundamental requisite; and why? Why does this not banish sprightliness and wit? What are, generally speaking, the best letters; and what mark follows? What must, however, be remarked; and why is this the case? What is observed of Pliny's Letters; and what are their characteristics? Of those of Cicero, what is remarked? How are they composed; and what much enhances their merit?

purity and elegance, but without the least affectation ; and what much enhances their merit, they were written without any intention of being published to the world. Cicero himself, it appears, kept no copies of his own letters ; but for the large collection still extant, amounting to more than a thousand, we are indebted to his freedman Tyro, who collected and published them after Cicero's death.

The most distinguished collection of letters in the English language, is that of Mr. Pope, Dean Swift, and their friends ; a part of which are published in Mr. Pope's works, and the rest in those of Dean Swift. They are entertaining and agreeable ; and contain much wit and refinement. Some of them, however, bear the impress of too much study and attention. Those of Dr. Arbuthnot deserve high praise ; being written with ease and beautiful simplicity. Dean Swift's, also, are unaffected ; and as a proof that they are, they exhibit his character fully, with all its defects. Several of Lord Bolingbroke's, and of Bishop Atterbury's letters, are masterly. In those of Mr. Pope, there is, in general, too much study ; and his letters in particular to Ladies, are too full of affectation.

The gayety and vivacity of the French genius appears to much advantage in their letters, and have given birth to several agreeable publications. Balzac and Voiture are both celebrated epistolary writers. The former is swelling and pompous ; the latter sparkling and witty. The letters of Madame de Sevigné, are esteemed the most accomplished model of a familiar correspondence. They turn, indeed, very much upon trifles, the incidents of the day, and the news of the town ; and if they did not, they would not be French ; but still, they are easy, varied, lively, and beautiful. The letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montague, have much of the French ease and vivacity ; and are, perhaps, more remarkable for pure epistolary style, than any other letters in the English language.

There remains one other species of composition in prose,

As Cicero kept no copies of his letters, how were they preserved ? What is the most distinguished collection of letters in the English language ; and where are they published ? What is remarked of them ; but of what do some of them bear the impress ? What is observed of those of Dr. Arbuthnot, Dean Swift, Lord Bolingbroke, Bishop Atterbury, and Mr. Pope ? Of the gayety and vivacity of the French genius, what is remarked ; to what have they given birth ; and what illustrations follow ? Of the letters of Madame de Sevigné, and of those of Lady Montague, what is observed ? What other species of composition remains to be considered ?

to be considered, and which comprehends a very numerous, though, in general, a very insignificant class of writings, under the name of romances and novels. These may, at first view, seem too insignificant to deserve any particular attention; but their influence is very great, both on the morals and the taste of a nation. In reality, fictitious histories might be employed for very useful purposes. They furnish one of the best channels for conveying instruction, for painting human life and manners, for showing the errors into which we are betrayed by our passions, for rendering virtue amiable, and vice odious, that can possibly be afforded. The effect of well contrived stories towards accomplishing these purposes, is greater than any effect that can be produced by simple instruction; and hence we find, that the wisest men in all ages, have more or less employed fables and fictions, as the vehicles of knowledge. These have even been the basis of both epic and dramatic poetry. It is not, therefore, the nature of this sort of writing, considered in itself, but the manner of its execution, that exposes it to contempt. Lord Bacon remarks, that our taste for fictitious history, is a proof of the greatness and dignity of the human mind. 'Not satisfied with the sober realities of life,' he observes, 'we create worlds according to our fancy, in order to gratify our capacious desires; accommodating the appearances of things to the desires of the mind, not bringing down the mind, as history and philosophy do, to the course of events.' As fictitious history, therefore, wants neither dignity nor use, we shall make a few observations on the rise and progress of it, and the different forms it has assumed in different countries.

Fictitious history originated at a very early period of the world. In the eastern nations, particularly, the attention of men was, from the earliest times, much turned towards invention, and the love of fiction. Their divinity, their philosophy, and their politics, were clothed in fables and parables. The Arabian Nights' Entertainments are the production of a romantic invention, but of a rich and amusing

Why do these deserve particular attention; and why might fictitious histories be employed for useful purposes? Of their effect, what is farther observed; and hence what follows? Of what are these the basis; and what follows? Of our taste for fictitious history, what says Lord Bacon; and, therefore, what shall we do? What account is given of the origin of fictitious history; of the Arabian Nights, what is remarked; and what others are mentioned?

imagination ; exhibiting a singular and curious display of manners and characters, and beautified with a very humane morality. Among the ancient Greeks and Romans also, we hear of fictitious histories, but none of them merit particular criticism.

During the dark ages, this sort of writing assumed a new and very singular form, and for a long time made a great figure in the world. The martial spirit of those nations among whom the feudal government prevailed ; the establishment of single combat, as an allowed method of deciding causes both of justice and of honor ; the appointment of champions in the cause of women, who could not maintain their own right by the sword ; together with the institution of military tournaments, gave rise, in those times, to that marvellous system of chivalry, which is one of the most singular appearances in the history of mankind. Upon these were founded those romances of knight-errantry, which carried an ideal chivalry to a still more extravagant height than it had reached in fact. They exhibited knights as patterns, not only of the most heroic courage, but as superlatively eminent for religion, generosity, courtesy, and fidelity ; and ladies, who were distinguished, in the greatest degree, for modesty, delicacy, and dignity of manners.

The earliest of these romances was written in the eleventh century. The subject is the achievements of Charlemagne and his peers, in driving the Saracens out of France and a part of Spain—the same subject that Ariosto has taken for his celebrated poem of Orlando Furioso, which, of the romances of those times, is unquestionably the most perfect model that was produced. In Spain, where the taste for this sort of writing was most prevalent, the ingenious Cervantes, in the beginning of the seventeenth century, contributed greatly to explode it ; and the abolition of tournaments, the prohibition of single combat, the disbelief of magic and enchantments, and the general change of manners throughout Europe, began to give a new turn to fictitious composition.

Of the second stage of romance writing, the Cleopatra of

What is said of this sort of writing during the dark ages ; and what gave rise to that marvellous system of chivalry which then prevailed ? Upon these what were formed ; and what do they exhibit ? When was the earliest of these romances written ; what is the subject of it ; and of Orlando Furioso, what remark follows ? What was done by Cervantes in Spain ; and what followed ? What are examples of the second stage of romance writing ; and of these what is observed ; and what followed ?

Madame Scuderi, and the *Arcadia* of Sir Philip Sydney, are good examples. In these, however, there was still too large a proportion of the marvellous; and the books were too voluminous and unwieldy. Romance writing appeared, therefore, in a new form: it dwindled down to the familiar novel. These, at first, were, in general, of a trifling nature, without the appearance of moral tendency, or useful instruction. Latterly, however, novel writing has, in its spirit, been very much improved. The conduct of persons in interesting situations in real life, has been exhibited; that whatever is laudable or defective in character, might be clearly perceived.

Upon this plan, until recently, the French far surpassed the English; and the *Gil Blas* of Le Sage, the *Marianne* of Marivaux, and the *Nouvelle Heloise* of Rousseau, stood unrivalled. This, however, at present, is far from being the case. Besides *Robinson Crusoe*, the novels of Mr. Fielding, and those of Mr. Richardson, all of which are well known, we have recently produced many works of fiction, which confer the highest honor on both the morals and the taste of their authors. Whilst the English language shall be understood and appreciated, and a perception of the beautiful and the pathetic remain, the works of Sir Walter Scott, of Miss Porter, and of some others, of England, and of Washington Irving, of America, will continue to be read with deep interest, and lasting advantage.

What was, at first, the character of these; but what has novel writing latterly become? Upon this plan, until recently, how did the French and the English compare; and of their present state, what illustrative remarks follow?

ANALYSIS.

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|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Philosophical writing. | a. Its requisites. |
| A. Accuracy and precision requisite. | B. Ancient letters. |
| B. The style. | C. Modern letters. |
| 2. Dialogues. | 4. Fictitious history. |
| A. Ancient dialogists. | A. Lord Bacon's remark. |
| B. Modern dialogists. | B. Its origin. |
| 3. Epistolary writing. | C. Its different forms. |
| A. A distinct species of composition. | D. Its present state. |

LECTURE XXXV.

NATURE OF POETRY—ITS ORIGIN AND PROGRESS—VERSIFICATION.

As we have now finished our observations on the different kinds of writing in prose, it remains to treat of poetical composition. Before we enter on the consideration of any of its particular kinds, we design, in this lecture, as an introduction to the subject of poetry in general, to treat of its nature, give an account of its origin, and make some observations on versification, or poetical numbers.

Our first inquiry is, What is poetry? and wherein does it differ from prose? The answer to this question is not so easy as might at first be imagined; and critics have disputed much concerning it. The essence of poetry is supposed by Plato, Aristotle, and others, to consist in fiction. But this is certainly too limited; for though fiction may have a great share in many poetical compositions, yet many subjects of poetry may not be feigned; as where the poet describes objects which actually exist, or pours forth the real sentiments of his own heart. Others have made the characteristic of poetry to lie in imitation. But this is also indefinite: for several other arts imitate as well as poetry; and an imitation of human characters and manners may be carried on in the humblest prose, as well as in the loftiest poetic strain.

Perhaps the best definition that can be given of poetry is, 'that it is the language of passion, or of enlivened imagination, formed, most commonly, into regular numbers.' As the primary aim of the poet is to please and to move, it is to the imagination and the passions that he addresses himself. He may, and he ought to have it in his view, to instruct and to reform; but it is indirectly, and by pleasing and moving,

Of what does it now remain to treat? Before we enter on the consideration of any of its particular kinds, as what do we design this lecture? What is our first inquiry; and what is remarked of the answer to it? In what is the essence of poetry supposed, by some, to consist; but why is this too limited? In what have others made the characteristics of poetry to lie; but why is this indefinite? What is the best definition that can be given of poetry; and why does the poet address himself to the imagination and the passions?

that he accomplishes this end. His mind is supposed to be animated by some interesting object which fires his imagination, or engages his passions; and which, of course, communicates to his style a peculiar elevation suited to his ideas; very different from that mode of expression, which is natural to the mind in its calm, ordinary state. Though versification is, in general, the external distinction of poetry, yet there are some forms of verse so loose and familiar, as to be hardly distinguishable from prose; such as the verse of the Comedies of Terence; and there is also a species of prose, so measured in its cadence, and so much raised in its tone, as to approach very near to poetical numbers; such as the *Telemachus* of Fenelon; and the English translation of *Ossian*. The fact is, so far as the exterior form is concerned, verse and prose, on some occasions, run into each other, like light and shade.

It has been often observed that poetry is older than prose; and the concurring voice of all antiquity attests the truth of the remark. But in what sense this seemingly strange paradox holds true, has not always been well understood. There never, certainly, was any period of society, in which men conversed together in poetical numbers. It was in very humble and scanty prose that the first tribes carried on intercourse among themselves, relating to the wants and necessities of life. But from the very beginning of society, there were occasions on which they met together for feasts, sacrifices, and public assemblies; and on all such occasions music, song, and dance, made their principal entertainment. It is chiefly in America, that we have the opportunity of becoming acquainted with men in their savage state. Among the numerous tribes of this vast continent, music and song are, at all their meetings, carried on with an incredible degree of enthusiasm. It is in songs that they celebrate their religious rites; by these they lament their public and private calamities—the death of friends, or the loss of warriors;

What ought he to have in view; but what follows? In what state is his mind supposed to be; and what does this communicate to his style? Though versification, in general, is the external distinction of poetry, yet what remark follows; and what illustrations are given? What has been often observed; and what attests the truth of the remark? How is this seeming paradox fully explained? In what country have we an opportunity of becoming acquainted with man in his savage state? Among the tribes of this vast continent, what is remarked of music and song; and how is this remark illustrated?

express their joy on their victories; celebrate the great actions of their nation and their heroes; excite each other to perform brave exploits in war, or suffer death and torments with unshaken constancy. It is, therefore, in those rude effusions which the enthusiasm of fancy or passion suggested to untaught men, when roused by interesting events, and by their meetings together in public assemblies, that we see the first beginnings of poetic composition.

Man is, by nature, both a poet and a musician. The same impulse which produces an enthusiastic poetic style, prompted a certain melody, or modulation of sound, suited to the emotions of joy or grief, of admiration, love, or anger. There is a power in sound, which, partly from nature, and partly from habit and association, makes such pathetic impressions on the fancy, as delight even the wildest barbarians. Music and poetry, therefore, had the same origin; they were prompted by the same occasions; they were written in song; and, as long as they continued united, they, no doubt, naturally tended to heighten and exalt each others power. The first poets sung their own verses; and hence the beginning of what we call versification, or the management of words so as to be suited to some tune or melody.

From what has been said, it is manifest that the first compositions which were either recorded by writing, or transmitted by tradition, must have been poetical compositions. No other than these could draw the attention of men in their rude uncivilized state. Indeed they knew no other. Cool reasoning and plain discourse, had no power to attract savage tribes, addicted only to hunting and war. There was nothing that could either rouse the speaker to pour himself forth, or to draw the crowd to listen, but the high powers of passion, of music, and of song. This vehicle, therefore, and no other, could be employed by chiefs and legislators, when they meant to instruct or animate their tribes. Indeed, the earliest accounts which history gives as concerning all nations, bear testimony to these facts. In the first ages of Greece, priests, philosophers, and states-

Where, therefore, do we see the first beginnings of poetic composition? What is man by nature; and how is this illustrated? What power does sound possess; of music and poetry what inference is drawn; and what remarks follow? From what has been said, what is manifest; and how does it appear that they knew no other? By whom, and when, must this vehicle have been employed; and what bear testimony to these facts? From the first ages of Greece how is this illustrated?

men, all delivered their instructions in poetry. Apollo, Orpheus, and Amphion, their most ancient bards, are represented as the first tamers of mankind. Minos and Thales sung to the lyre the laws which they composed; and till the age immediately preceding that of Herodotus, history had appeared in no other form than that of poetical tales.

In the same manner, among all other nations, poets and songs are the first objects that make their appearance. Among the Scythian or Gothic nations, many of their kings and leaders were scolders or poets; and it is from their Runic songs, that the earliest writers of their history, acknowledge that they had derived their chief information. Among the Celtic tribes, in Gaul, Britain, and Ireland, their bards were held in the highest possible estimation, and possessed the greatest influence over the people. They were always near the person of the chief or sovereign; they recorded all his great exploits; they were employed as the ambassadors between contending tribes, and their persons were held sacred.

From this it follows, that as we have reason to look for poems and songs among the antiquities of all countries, so we may expect, that during their infancy, there will be, in the strain of these, a remarkable resemblance. The occasions of their being composed, are every where nearly the same. The praises of gods and heroes, the celebration of famed ancestors, the recital of martial deeds, songs of victory, and songs of lamentation over the misfortunes and death of their countrymen, occur amongst all nations; and the same enthusiasm and fire, the same wild and irregular, but animated composition, concise and glowing style, bold and extravagant figures of speech, are the general distinguishing characters of all the most ancient original poetry.

Diversity of climate, and of manner of living, will, however, occasion some diversity in the strain of the first poetry of nations; chiefly according as those nations are of a more ferocious, or more gentle spirit; and according as they advance faster or slower in the art of civilization. Thus we find all the remains of the ancient Gothic po-

In the same manner, who are the first objects that make their appearance among all nations; and how is this illustrated from the Scythians, and the Celtic tribes? What station did they occupy? From this what follows; and how is this fully illustrated? What will be the effect of diversity of climate; and according to what? What illustration of this remark is given from the Gothic, Peruvian and Chinese, Celtic, Grecian, and Persian poetry?

etry remarkably fierce, breathing nothing but slaughter and blood; while the Peruvian and Chinese songs turned, from the earliest times, upon milder subjects. The Celtic poetry, in the days of Ossian, though chiefly of the martial kind, yet had attained a considerable mixture of tenderness and refinement. Among the Grecians, poetry appears to have soon received a philosophical cast, if we may judge from the subjects on which it was, at an early period, employed; and the Arabians and Persians used poetry as the medium of their moral instructions.

During the infancy of poetry, all the different kinds of it were mingled in the same composition, according as inclination, enthusiasm, or casual incidents, directed the poet's strain. In the progress of society and arts, they began to assume those different forms, and to be distinguished by those different names, under which we now know them. Odes would naturally be among the first compositions; according as the bards were roused by religious feeling, love, or any other warm sentiment, to pour themselves forth in song. Elegiac poetry would as naturally arise from lamentations over their deceased friends. The recital of the achievements of their ancestors, and their heroes, gave birth to what we now call epic poetry; and in the introduction of different bards, speaking in the character of their heroes, we find the first outlines of tragedy or dramatic writing.

Poetry, in its ancient original condition, was, perhaps, more vigorous than it is in its modern state. It included then the whole burst of the human mind—the whole exertion of its imaginative faculties. It spoke the language of passion, and no other; for to passion it owed its birth. Prompted and inspired by objects which to him seemed great, by events which interested his country or his friends, the early bard arose and sung. He sung, indeed, in wild and disorderly strains; but they were the native effusions of his heart; they were the ardent conceptions of admiration or resentment, of sorrow or friendship, which he poured forth. In after ages, however, when poetry became a regular art,

During the infancy of poetry, what is remarked of all the different kinds; and what was the effect of improvement in arts? What would naturally be among the first compositions; and why? How would elegiac, epic, and dramatic poetry, naturally originate? What is remarked of poetry in its ancient condition; and what did it then include? Why did it speak the language of passion only; and how is this illustrated? What is remarked, however, of the poetry of after ages; and what illustration follows?

studied for reputation and for gain, authors began to affect what they did not feel. Composing coolly in their closets, they endeavored to imitate passion, rather than to express it; they tried to force their imagination into raptures, or to supply the defect of native warmth, by those artificial ornaments which might give composition a splendid appearance.

We next proceed to treat of English versification. Nations whose language and pronunciation were of a musical kind, rested their versification chiefly upon the quantities of their syllables. Others, the quantities of whose syllables was not so distinctly perceived in pronouncing them, rested the melody of their verse upon the number of syllables it contained, upon the proper disposition of accents and pauses in it, and frequently upon that return of corresponding sounds, which we call rhyme. The former was the case with the Greeks and Romans; the latter is the case with us, and with most modern nations. Among the Greeks and Romans, almost every syllable had a fixed and determined quantity; and their manner of pronouncing rendered this so sensible to the ear; that a long syllable was precisely equal in time to two short ones. Upon this principle, the number of syllables in their hexameter verse was allowed to vary from 13 to 17; but the musical time was, notwithstanding, the same in every verse; and was always equal to twelve long syllables.

But the introduction of this regular succession of syllables into English verse, would be altogether out of place; for the difference made between long and short syllables, in our manner of pronouncing them, is very inconsiderable. The only perceptible difference among our syllables, arises from some of them being uttered with that stronger percussive force of voice, which we call accent. This accent, however, does not always make the syllable longer. It communicates only more force of sound; and it is upon a certain order and succession of accented and unaccented syllables, more than upon their being short or long, that the melody of our verse depends. If we take any of Mr. Pope's lines, and in reciting them alter the quantity of the syllables,

To what do we next proceed; and on what do different nations rest their versification? With whom was the former the case; and how is this fully illustrated? But why would the introduction of this method into English verse, be out of place; and what is the only perceptible difference among our syllables? Of this accent what is remarked; upon what does the melody of our verse depend; and how is this illustrated?

the music of the verse will not be much injured : but if we do not accent the syllables according as the verse dictates, its melody will be totally destroyed.

In the construction of our verse, there is another essential circumstance. This is the cæsural pause, which falls towards the middle of each line. This pause may fall after the 4th, the 5th, the 6th, or the 7th syllable; and by this means uncommon variety and richness are given to English versification.

When the pause falls earliest, that is, after the 4th syllable, the briskest melody is thereby formed, and the most spirited air given to the line. In the following lines of the *Rape of the Lock*, Mr. Pope has, with exquisite propriety, suited the construction of the verse to the subject.

On her white breast | a sparkling cross she wore,
Which Jews might kiss | and infidels adore;
Her lively looks | a sprightly mind disclose,
Quick as her eyes, | and as unfixed as those.

When the pause falls after the 5th syllable, which divides the line into two equal portions, the melody is sensibly altered. The verse loses that brisk and lively air which it had with the former pause, and becomes more smooth, gentle, and flowing.

Eternal sunshine | of the spotless mind,
Each prayer accepted, | and each wish resign'd.

When the pause follows the 6th syllable, the tenor of the music becomes solemn and grave. The verse marches now with a more slow and measured pace than in either of the two former cases.

The wrath of Peleus' son, | the direful spring
Of all the Grecian woes, | O goddess sing!

The grave cadence becomes still more sensible, when the pause follows the 7th syllable. This kind of verse occurs less frequently than either of the others; but it has a happy effect in diversifying the melody of long poems.

What other circumstance is there in the construction of our verse; and of this what is remarked? Where may it fall; and what is its effect? What is remarked of this pause when it falls after the 4th syllable; and what illustration is given? What is said of it when it falls after the 5th syllable; and what is the illustration? What is observed of the pause when it follows the 6th syllable; and what illustration follows? When does the grave cadence become still more sensible; of this kind of verse what is observed; and what is the example?

And in the smooth descriptive | murmur still,
Long loved, adored ideas, | all adieu.

We have taken our examples from verses in rhyme ; because in these our versification is subjected to the strictest law. As blank verse is of a freer kind, and naturally is read with less cadence or tone, the pauses in it, and the effect of them, are not always so sensible to the ear. It is constructed, however, entirely upon the same principles with respect to the place of the pause, and is a noble, bold, and disencumbered mode of versification. It is free from the full close which rhyme forces upon the ear at the termination of every couplet. Hence it is peculiarly suited to subjects of dignity and force. It is more favorable than rhyme to the sublime, and the highly pathetic. Rhyme finds a proper place in the middle regions of poetry ; and blank verse in the highest.

The present form of our English heroic rhyme in couplets, is a modern species of versification. The measure generally used in the days of Queen Elizabeth and James I., was the stanza of eight lines. Waller was the first who gave the fashion to couplets ; and Dryden established the usage. Waller harmonized our sense, and Dryden carried it to perfection. The versification of Pope is peculiar. It is flowing and smooth, correct and labored, in the highest degree. He has totally thrown aside the triplets, which are so common in Dryden and the older poets. As to ease and variety, Dryden excels Pope. He makes his couplets to run into one another, and has somewhat the freedom of blank verse.

Whence have we taken our examples ; why ; and of blank verse what is remarked ? From what is it free ; to what is it suited ; and for what favorable ? What is observed of the present form of our heroic rhyme ; and when was the stanza of eight lines used ? Of Waller, Dryden, and Pope, what is remarked ; and how do the two latter compare ?

ANALYSIS.

Poetry.

1. The definition of poetry.
2. Its origin and antiquity.
 - A. Illustrated.
3. The different kinds undistinguished.
4. Its early characteristics.
5. English versification.

- A. Contrasted with ancient.
- B. The accent.
6. The cæsural pause.
 - A. Its effect when differently placed.
7. Blank verse.
8. The introduction of couplets.

LECTURE XXXVI.

PASTORAL POETRY—LYRIC POETRY.

HAVING, in the last lecture, given an account of the rise and progress of poetry, and made some observations on the nature of English versification, we proceed to treat of the chief kinds of poetical composition, and of the critical rules that relate to them. We shall first consider pastoral poetry.

It has been a prevailing opinion among authors, that, because the life which mankind at first led was rural, therefore their first poetry was pastoral, or employed on the celebration of rural scenes and objects. That it would borrow many of its images and allusions from those natural objects with which men were best acquainted, there can be no doubt; but the calm and tranquil scenes of rural felicity were, by no means, the first objects which inspired that strain of composition, which we now call poetry. It was inspired in the first periods of every nation, by events and objects which roused men's passions; or, at least, awakened their wonder and admiration. The actions of their gods and heroes, their own exploits in war, the successes or misfortunes of their countrymen and friends, furnished the first themes to the bards of every country. It was not till men had begun to assemble in great cities, and the bustle of courts and large societies was known, that pastoral poetry assumed its present form. Men then began to look back upon the more simple and innocent life which their forefathers had led, or which, at least, they fancied them to have led: they looked back upon it with pleasure, and in those rural scenes and pastoral occupations, supposing a degree of felicity to take place, superior to what they now enjoyed, conceived the idea of celebrating it in poetry. In the court of king Ptolemy, Theocritus wrote the first pastorals with which we are acquainted; and in the court of Augustus, Virgil imitated him.

What was done in the last lecture; and to what do we now proceed? Of pastoral poetry, what opinion has prevailed; and of this opinion what does our author remark? By what was it inspired; and what furnished the first themes to the bards of every country? It was not till when that pastoral poetry assumed its present form; what did men then begin to do; and what followed? Who wrote the first pastorals; where; and by whom was he imitated; and where?

The pastoral is a natural and very agreeable form of poetic composition. It recalls to our imagination those gay scenes and pleasing views of nature, which are generally the delight of our childhood and youth; and to which, in more advanced years, the greater part of men recur with pleasure. It exhibits to us a life, with which we are accustomed to associate the ideas of peace, of leisure, and of innocence. It transports us into the calm elysian regions. At the same time, no subject seems to be more favorable to poetry. Amidst rural objects, nature presents, on all hands, the finest field for description; and nothing appears to flow more readily into poetical numbers, than rivers and mountains, meadows and hills, flocks and trees, and shepherds void of care. Hence this species of poetry has, at all times, allured many readers, and excited many writers.

The pastoral poet must form to himself the idea of a rural state, such as in certain periods of society may have actually taken place, where there was ease, equality, and innocence—where shepherds were gay and agreeable, without being learned or refined; and plain and artless, without being gross and wretched. The great charm of pastoral poetry arises from the view which it exhibits of the tranquillity and happiness of rural life. This pleasing illusion, therefore, the poet must carefully maintain. He must display to us all that is agreeable in that state, but hide whatever is displeasing. Distresses, indeed, and anxieties, he may attribute to it; for it would be altogether unnatural to suppose any condition of human life to be without them; but they must be of such a nature, as not to shock the fancy with any thing peculiarly disgusting in the pastoral life. In short, the pastoral poet should be careful to exhibit whatever is most pleasing only, in the pastoral state. He must paint its simplicity, its tranquillity, and its happiness; but conceal its rudeness and misery. His pictures must not be those of real life. It is sufficient that they resemble it. He has occasion, accordingly, for great art. And to have a proper idea of pastoral

What does the pastoral recal to our imagination; and what does it exhibit to us? Whence does it transport us; and how does it appear to be, of all subjects, most favorable to poetry? Hence what has followed? Of what state must the pastoral poet form to himself an idea? From what does the great charm of pastoral poetry arise; and how must this pleasing illusion be kept up? What may he attribute to it; why; but of what nature must they be? In short, of what should the pastoral poet be careful; and how is this illustrated? To have a proper idea of pastoral poetry, what must we consider?

poetry, we must consider, first, the scenery; next, the characters; and, lastly, the subjects which it exhibits.

The scene, it is evident, must always be laid in the country; and much of the poet's merit depends on describing it beautifully. Virgil is, in this respect, excelled by Theocritus, whose descriptions of natural beauties are richer and more picturesque than the other. In every pastoral, a rural prospect should be drawn with distinctness. It is insipid to have unmeaning groups of roses and violets, of birds, and breezes, and brooks. A good poet should give us such a landscape as a painter could copy. His objects must be particularized; the stream, the rock, or the tree, must each of them stand forth, so as to make a figure in the imagination, and to give us a pleasing conception of the place where we are. In his allusions to natural objects, too, as well as in professed descriptions of scenery, the poet should study clearness and variety. He must diversify his face of nature, by presenting to us new images; or otherwise, he will soon become insipid. It is also incumbent on him to suit the scenery to the subject of the pastoral; and, according as it is of a gay or melancholy kind, to exhibit nature under such forms as may correspond with the emotions or sentiments which he describes. Thus Virgil, when he gives the lamentation of a despairing lover, communicates a gloomy sadness to the scene.

*Tantum inter densas, umbrosa cacumina, fagos
Assidue veniebat; ibi hæc incondita solus
Montibus et Sylvis studio jactabat inani.*

*Mid shades of thickest beach he pin'd alone,
To the wild woods and mountains made his moan;
Still day by day, in incoherent strains,
'Twas all he could, despairing told his pains.*

Warton.

With regard to the characters in pastorals, it is not sufficient that they are persons who reside constantly in the country. Courtiers and citizens, who resort occasionally to retirement, would not figure well in pastorals. The per-

Where must the scene be laid; what follows; and how do Virgil and Theocritus, in this respect, compare? In every pastoral what should be done; and why? What should a good poet do; and how is this illustrated? What is remarked of allusions to natural objects; and how is this, also, illustrated? What is also incumbent on him; and what follows? What illustration of this remark is given from Virgil? With regard to characters in pastorals, what is not sufficient? Who would not figure well in pastorals; and why?

sons in such poems must be actual shepherds, and wholly engaged in rural occupations. The shepherd must be plain and unaffected, without being dull or insipid. He may have good sense and reflection; he may have sprightliness and vivacity; he may have very tender and delicate feelings; since these are, more or less, the portion of man in all ranks of life; and since, doubtless, there was much genius in the world, before there were learning or arts to refine it. But then he should never deal in general reflections, or in conceits, for these are consequences of refinement. When Aminta, in Tasso, is disentangling his mistress's hair from the tree to which a savage had bound it, he is represented as saying: 'Cruel tree! how couldst thou injure that lovely hair which did thee so much honor? Thy rugged trunk was not worthy of such lovely knots. What advantage have the servants of love, if those precious chains are common to them, and to the trees.' Strained and forced sentiments like these, suit not the words. The language of rural personages is that of plain good sense, and natural feeling. Hence the charm of the following lines in Virgil:

Sepibus in nostris parvam te roscida mala
(Dux ego vester eram) vidi cum matre legentem:
Alter ab undecimo tum me jam ceperat annus,
Jam fragiles pateram à terrâ contingere ramos.
Ut vidi, ut perii, ut me malus abstulit error!

Once with your mother to our field you came
For dewy apples; thence I date my flame;
The choicest fruit I pointed to your view,
Though young, my raptur'd soul was fix'd on you;
The boughs I just could reach with little arms;
But then, even then, could feel thy powerful charms.
O, how I gaz'd, in pleasing transport lost:
How glow'd my heart, in sweet delusion lost!

Warton.

With respect to the subject of pastorals, there is a nicety which is absolutely necessary. For it is not enough, that the poets should give us shepherds discoursing together. Every good poem must have a topic that should, in some way, be interesting. In this lies the difficulty of pastoral poetry. The active scenes of country life are too barren of incidents.

What qualities may the shepherd possess; and for what reason? But in what should he never deal; why; and what illustration is given from Tasso? What is the language of rural personages; and of this what illustration is given from Virgil? With respect to the subjects of pastorals, what is remarked; and why? Every good poem must have what; and of this what is remarked? Of the active scenes of country life, and of the condition of the shepherd, what is observed; and hence what has followed?

The condition of a shepherd has few things in it that produce curiosity and surprise. Hence the generality of pastorals are common place, and unusually insipid. Yet this insipidity is not to be ascribed altogether to the barrenness of the topics. It is, in a great measure, the fault of the poet; for human passions are much the same in every situation and rank of life. And what an infinite variety of objects within the rural sphere do the passions present! The various adventures which give occasion to those engaged in country life to display their disposition and temper; the scenes of domestic felicity or disquiet; the attachment of friends and brothers; the rivalry and competition of lovers; the unexpected success or misfortunes of families, might give occasion to many pleasing and tender incidents; and were more of the narrative and sentimental intermixed with the descriptive in this kind of poetry, it would become much more interesting to the bulk of readers, than it now is.

The two great fathers of pastoral poetry are Theocritus and Virgil. Theocritus was a Sicilian, and has laid the scene of his pastorals in that country. For the simplicity of his sentiments, the harmony of his numbers, and the richness of his scenery, he is highly distinguished. He is the original of which Virgil is the imitator: for most of Virgil's highest beauties are copied from Theocritus. He must be allowed, however, to have imitated him with great judgment, and, in some respects, to have improved upon him. For Theocritus sometimes descends into ideas that are gross and mean, and makes his shepherds abusive and immodest; while Virgil is free from offensive rusticity, and, at the same time, preserves the character of pastoral simplicity.

The modern writers of pastorals have, in general, imitated Theocritus and Virgil. Sannazarius, however, a Latin poet, in the age of Leo X., attempted a bold innovation, by composing piscatory eclogues, and changing the scene from woods to the sea, and from the life of shepherds to that of

Yet, to what is this insipidity not to be ascribed; and why is it the fault of the poet? What objects within the rural sphere do the passions present? What would render this kind of poetry still more interesting? Who are the fathers of pastoral poetry; and what is observed of the former? How does Virgil compare with him; and what is farther remarked on this subject? What is remarked of the modern writers of pastorals? Who, however, attempted a bold innovation; what was it; and why did it not succeed?

fishermen. But his attempt was unhappy, and he has had no imitators. The toilsome life of the fisherman had nothing agreeable to present to the imagination. Fish and marine productions have nothing poetical in them. Of all the moderns, Gesner, a poet of Switzerland, has been the most happy in his pastoral compositions. He has introduced in his *Idyls* many new ideas. His scenery is striking, and his descriptions are lively. He presents pastoral life to us, with all the embellishments of which it is susceptible; but without any excess of refinement. But what forms the chief merit of his poetry is, he writes to the heart; and has enriched the subject of *Idyls* with incidents which give rise to much tender sentiment. Scenes of domestic felicity are beautifully painted. The mutual affection of husbands and wives, of parents and children, of brothers and sisters, as well as of lovers, are displayed in a touching manner.

Neither the pastorals of Mr. Pope, nor those of Mr. Philips, are a great honor to English poetry. Those of Mr. Pope were composed in his youth; which may be an apology for other faults, but cannot well excuse the barrenness that appears in them. They are written, it is true, in remarkably smooth and flowing numbers, but this is their principal merit; for there is scarcely a thought or a description in them, which is not a repetition of what is to be found in Virgil, and all other poets who write of rural themes. Philips attempted to be more simple and natural than Pope; but he wanted genius to support the attempt. His topics, like those of Pope, are beaten; and instead of being natural and simple, he is insipid and flat. The *Shepherd's Week* of Mr. Gay was designed to ridicule Philips; and is an ingenious burlesque of pastoral writing, when it copies, too, completely, the manners of clowns and rustics. Mr. Shenstone's pastoral ballad, is one of the most elegant poems in the English language.

The *Gentle Shepherd* of Allan Ramsay, is a pastoral composition which must not be omitted. For this admirable poem it is, perhaps, a disadvantage, that it is written in the

Of Gesner, what is observed; and what is the character of his *Idyls*? But what is it that forms the chief merit of his poetry; and how is this illustrated? What is said of Mr. Pope's, and of Mr. Philips's pastorals; and how is this remark fully illustrated? Of Mr. Gay's *Shepherd's Week*, and of Mr. Shenstone's pastoral ballad, what is observed? What is said of the *Gentle Shepherd* of Allan Ramsay; and to this poem what are disadvantages? But what are its excellences?

old rustic dialect of Scotland, which must soon be obsolete : and it is a farther disadvantage to it, that it is formed so accurately on the rural manners of Scotland, that none but a native of that country can fully understand or relish it. But of natural description it is full ; and it excels in tenderness of sentiment. The characters are skilfully drawn ; the incidents are affecting, and the scenery and manners are lively and correct.

We proceed next to treat of lyric poetry, or the ode—a species of poetical composition which possesses much dignity, and in which many writers have distinguished themselves in every age. Ode is, in Greek, equivalent to song or hymn ; and lyric poetry implies, that the verses are accompanied with a lyre, or with a musical instrument. The ode retains its first and most ancient form ; and sentiments of some kind or other constitute its subject. It recites not actions ; but its spirit, and the manner of its execution, give it its chief value. It admits of a bolder and more passionate strain, than is allowed in simple recitations. Hence the enthusiasm that belongs to it. Hence, too, that neglect of regularity, and that disorder it is supposed to admit.

There are four denominations under which all odes may be classed. First, hymns addressed to the Supreme Being, and relating to religious subjects. Of this nature are the Psalms of David, which exhibit to us this species of lyric poetry, in its highest degree of perfection. Secondly, heroic odes, which concern the celebration of heroes and great actions. Of this kind are the odes of Pindar ; and the splendid Marco Bozzaris of F. G. Halleck. Thirdly, moral and philosophical odes, which refer chiefly to virtue, friendship, and humanity. Of this kind are many of the odes of Horace, and several of our best modern lyrics ; among which are, ‘ The burial of Sir John Moore,’ by the Rev. Mr. Wolf, and Halleck’s elegiac, on the death of Dr. J. R. Drake—both most finished productions. Fourthly, festive and amorous odes, which are calculated for pleasure and amusement. Of this nature are the odes of Anacreon, and many of those of Thomas Moore.

To treat of what do we next proceed ; and of it what is remarked ? To what is ode equivalent ; and what does it signify ? What does the ode retain ; what constitute its subject ; and what give it its chief value ? Of what does it admit ; and hence what follows ? Under how many denominations may all odes be classed ; and what are instances and examples of each ?

As enthusiasm is considered the characteristic of the ode, it has too much degenerated into licentiousness; and this species of writing has, above all others, been infected with the want of order, method, and connection. The poet is immediately out of sight. He is so abrupt and eccentric, so irregular and obscure, that we cannot partake of his raptures. It is not, indeed, necessary, that the structure of the ode should be so perfectly exact and formal as a didactic poem. But in every work of genius there ought to be a whole, and this whole should consist of parts. These parts, too, should have a bond of connection. In the ode, the transitions from thought to thought may be brisk and rapid, but the connection of ideas should be preserved; and the author should think, and not rave.

Pindar, the great father of lyric poetry, has led his imitators into wildness and enthusiastic fancy. They imitate his disorder, without catching his spirit. In Horace every thing is correct, harmonious, and happy. His elevation is moderate and not rapturous. Grace and elegance are his characteristics. He supports a moral sentiment with dignity, touches a gay one with felicity, and has the art to trifle most agreeably. His language, too, is always very fortunate. Buchanan's Ode to the First of May, is a beautiful production.

In the French, the odes of Jean Baptiste Rousseau, are justly celebrated for great beauty of sentiment and expression. In our own language, Dryden's ode on St. Cecilia is well known. Mr. Gray, in some of his odes, is eminent for tenderness and sublimity; and in the more recent works of Burns and Campbell, there are found several very beautiful lyric poems.

As enthusiasm is considered the characteristic of the ode, what has followed; and how is this illustrated? What is not, indeed, necessary; but what remarks follow? What is observed of Pindar, and of his imitators? What is remarked of Horace; and what other beautiful poem is mentioned? Of odes in the French and the English languages, what is observed; and what are examples?

ANALYSIS.

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pastoral poetry. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Its origin and its nature. B. The state of pastoral society. C. The scene. D. The characters. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Illustrated. E. The subjects. F. Ancient pastorals. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> G. Modern pastorals. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Their relative merits. 2. Lyric poetry. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. The nature of the ode. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Different kinds of odes. b. Its enthusiasm. c. Ancient odes. d. Modern odes. |
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LECTURE XXXVII.

DIDACTIC POETRY—DESCRIPTIVE POETRY.

HAVING treated of pastoral and lyric poetry, we proceed next to didactic ; the express intention of which is to convey instruction and knowledge. A didactic poem differs in form only, from a philosophical, a moral, or a critical treatise in prose. At the same time, by means of its form, it has several advantages. By the charm of versification and numbers, it renders instruction more agreeable ; by the descriptions, episodes, and other embellishments, which it may interweave, it detains and engages the fancy ; it fixes, also, useful circumstances more deeply in the memory.

A didactic poem may be executed in different ways. The poet may choose some instructive subject, and he may treat it regularly, and in form ; or without intending a great or regular work, he may only inveigh against particular vices, or make some moral observations on human life and characters. But the highest species of didactic composition, is a formal treatise on some philosophical or grave subject. Of this nature we have several, both ancient and modern, of great merit and character : such as Virgil's *Georgics*, Pope's *Essay on Criticism*, Akenside's *Pleasures of the Imagination*, Armstrong on *Health*, Young's *Night Thoughts*, Goldsmith's *Traveller* and his *Deserted Village*, Campbell's *Pleasures of Hope*, Horace's, Vida's, and Boileau's *Art of Poetry*.

In all such works, as instruction is the professed object, the fundamental merit consists in sound thought, just principles, clear and apt illustrations. It is necessary, however, that the poet enliven his lessons by figures, and incidents, and poetical painting. Virgil, in his *Georgics*, presents us here with a perfect model. He has the art of raising and

To what kind of poetry do we now proceed ; and what is the intention of it ? From what does a didactic poem differ in form only ; and at the same time, by means of its form, what advantages has it ? In what different ways may a didactic poem be executed ? But what is the highest species of didactic composition ; and of this nature, what examples have we ? In all such works, in what does the fundamental merit consist ; but what, however, is necessary ? Of this, where have we a perfect model ; and what art does he possess ?

beautifying the most trivial circumstances in rural life. When he is to say that the labor of the farmer must begin in spring, he expresses himself in the following manner:

Vere novo, gelidus canis cum montibus humor
Liquitur, et Zephyro putris se gleba resolvit;
Depresso incipiat jam tum mihi Taurus aratro
Ingemere, et sulco attritus splendescere vomer.

While yet the spring is young, while earth unbinds
Her frozen bosom to the western winds;
While mountain snows dissolve against the sun,
And streams yet new from precipices run;
Even in this early dawning of the year,
Produce the plough, and yoke the sturdy steer,
And goad him till he groans beneath his toil,
Till the bright share is buried in the soil.

Dryden.

And instead of telling his husbandman in plain language, that his crops will fail through bad management, his language is,

Heu, magnum alterius frustra spectabis acervum,
Concussa que famem in silvis solabere quercu.

On others' crops you may with envy look,
And shake for food the long abandoned oak.

Dryden.

In all didactic works, such a method and order are requisite, as shall exhibit clearly a connected train of instruction. With regard to episodes and embellishments, the writers of didactic poetry may indulge in great liberties. For in a poetical performance, a continued series of instruction, without entertaining embellishments, would fatigue, and even disgust. The great art of rendering a didactic poem interesting, is to relieve and amuse the reader, by connecting some agreeable episodes with the principal subject. These are always the parts of the work which are best known, and which contribute most to support the reputation of the poet. The digressions in the *Georgics* of Virgil are all admirable. The happiness of a country life, the fable of Aristeus, and the tale of Orpheus and Eurydice, cannot be praised too highly.

A didactic poet ought, also, to exert his skill in connecting his episodes happily with his subjects. Virgil is dis-

To illustrate this remark, what examples are given? In all didactic works, what are requisite; but with regard to what may they indulge in great liberties; and why? What is the great art of rendering a didactic poem interesting; and of these, what is observed? From Virgil what examples are mentioned? In what ought a didactic poet also to exert his skill; and in this, also, who is distinguished?

tinguished for his address in this point also. After seeming to have left his husbandmen, he again returns to them very naturally by laying hold of some rural circumstance, to terminate his digression. Thus, having spoken of the battle of Pharsalia, he subjoins immediately, with much art:

Scilicet et tempus veniet, cum finibus illis
Agricola, incurvo terram molitus aratro,
Exesa inveniet scabra rubigine pila;
Aut gravibus rastris galeas pulsabit inanes,
Grandiaque effosis mirabitur ossa sepulchris.

Then, after length of time, the lab'ring swains
Who turn the turf of these unhappy plains,
Shall rusty arms from the plough'd furrows take,
And over empty helmets pass the rake;
Amus'd at antique titles on the stones,
And mighty relics of gigantic bones.

Dryden.

2 In our own language, as didactic writers, Dr. Akenside, Dr. Armstrong, Dr. Young, Dr. Goldsmith, and Mr. Campbell, are all celebrated. In his *Pleasures of the Imagination*, Dr. Akenside has attempted the most rich and poetical form of didactic writing; and though, in the execution of the whole he is not equal, he has, in several parts, succeeded happily, and displayed much genius. Dr. Armstrong, in his *Art of Preserving Health*, has not aimed at so high a strain as the other. But he is more equal; and maintains, throughout, a chaste and correct elegance.

As a moral and didactic writer, Dr. Young is very eminent. In all his works the marks of strong genius appear. His *Universal Passion* possesses the full merit of that animated conciseness of style, and lively description of characters, which are particularly requisite in didactic compositions. Though his wit may often be thought too sparkling, and his sentences too pointed, yet the vivacity of his fancy is so great, as to entertain every reader. In his *Night Thoughts* there is great energy of expression, several pathetic passages, many happy images, and many pious reflections. But it must be allowed, that he is sometimes overstrained and turgid, harsh and obscure.

To illustrate this remark, what passion is given? In our language, who are celebrated as didactic writers; and of Dr. Akenside's *Pleasures of the Imagination*, and Dr. Armstrong's *Art of Preserving Health*, what is remarked? As a moral and didactic writer, what is observed of Dr. Young? Of his *Universal Passion*, and of his *Night Thoughts*, what is remarked; but what must be allowed?

In praise of the Traveller, and of the Deserted Village, of Dr. Goldsmith, and of the Pleasures of Hope, of Campbell, too much can scarcely be said. They are in every one's hands—live in every one's memory—are felt in every one's heart; and are the daily delight of thousands. Their merits are so universally acknowledged, that the opinion of the critic and the commentator is no longer asked upon them. 'Song,' says an elegant writer, 'is but the eloquence of truth;' and of this eloquence are these poems made up—eloquence that will ever be listened to—truth that it is impossible to doubt.

Of didactic poetry, satires and epistles run into the most familiar style. It is probable, that the satire is a relic of the ancient comedy, the grossness of which was corrected by Ennius and Lucilius. It was Horace, however, who brought it to the perfection in which we now behold it. As it professes to have in view the reformation of manners, vice and vicious characters are its objects. It has been carried on in three different ways, by Horace, Juvenal, and Perseus. The satires of Horace have not much elevation. They rise but little above measured prose. Ease and grace are his characteristics; and he glances rather at the follies and weaknesses of mankind, than at their vices. He reproves with a smiling aspect; and while he moralizes like a sound philosopher, he discovers the politeness of a courtier. Juvenal is more declamatory and serious; and has greater strength and fire. Perseus is distinguished for the nobleness and sublimity of his morality.

Poetical epistles, when employed on moral and critical topics, have a resemblance, in the strain of their poetry, to satires. But in the epistolary form, many other subjects may be treated. Love poetry, or elegiac, may, for example, be carried on in this manner. The ethical epistles of Pope are a model; and he shows in them the strength of his genius. Here he had a full opportunity for displaying his

What is observed of the Traveller and the Deserted Village of Goldsmith, and of the Pleasures of Hope of Campbell; and how is this remark fully illustrated? What is the most familiar style of didactic poetry; and of this what is remarked? Who perfected it; and what remarks follow? What is said of the satires of Horace; and of Juvenal and Perseus, also, what is remarked? When have poetical epistles a resemblance to satires; and what remarks follow? What is observed of the ethical epistles of Mr. Pope? Here, to do what had he an opportunity; and what is remarked of his imitations of Horace?

judgment and wit, his concise and happy expression, together with the harmony of his numbers. His imitations of Horace are so happy, that it is difficult to say whether the original or the copy is the most to be admired.

We proceed next to treat of descriptive poetry, in which the highest exertions of genius may be displayed. In general, indeed, description is introduced as an embellishment, and constitutes not, properly, any particular species or mode of composition. It is the great test of a poet's imagination, and never fails to distinguish the original from the second-rate genius. A writer of an inferior class, sees nothing new or peculiar in the object he would paint; his conceptions of it are loose and vague; and his expressions, feeble and general. A true poet, on the contrary, places an object before our eyes. He catches the distinguishing features of it; gives it the color of life and reality; and places it in such a light that a painter might copy after him.

The great art of picturesque description lies in the selection of circumstances. In the first place, these should never be vulgar or common; but as far as possible, new and original, that they may catch the fancy, and attract the attention. In the next place, they ought to be such as particularize the object described, and mark it strongly; for all distinct ideas are formed upon particulars. In the third place, there should be a uniformity in the circumstances which are selected. In describing a great object, all the circumstances brought forward should tend to aggrandize it; and in exhibiting a gay object, all the circumstances should contribute to increase its beauty. In the last place, the circumstances in description should be expressed with conciseness and simplicity; for, when they are either too much exaggerated, or too long dwelt upon and extended, they never fail to enfeeble the impression that is designed to be made.

The largest and fullest descriptive performance, in any language, is the *Seasons* of Thomson—a work which

To what do we now proceed; and of it what remark follows? Of what is it the great test; what does it always distinguish; and how is this illustrated? In what does the great art of picturesque description lie; and in the first place, of these what is remarked; and why? In the next place, of what kind should these be; and why? In the third place, what should there be in the circumstances selected; and how is this illustrated? In the last place, why should the circumstances be expressed with conciseness and simplicity? What is the largest descriptive performance in any language; and what is said of it?

possesses very uncommon merit. Though the style, in the midst of much splendor and strength, is sometimes harsh and indistinct; yet, notwithstanding this defect, he is a strong and beautiful describer; for he possessed a feeling heart, and a warm imagination. He had studied nature with great care; was enamored of her beauties; and had the happy talent of painting them like a master. Several instances of most beautiful description might be selected from him, such as the shower in Spring, the morning in Summer, and the man perishing in the snow in Winter. But, at present, we shall produce a passage of another kind, to show the force of a single well chosen circumstance, to heighten a description. In his Summer, relating the effect of heat in the torrid zone, he is led to take notice of the pestilence that destroyed the English fleet at Carthage, under Admiral Vernon.

You, gallant Vernon, saw
 The miserable scene; you pitying saw,
 To infant weakness sunk the warrior's arm;
 Saw the deep racking pang; the ghastly form;
 The lip pale quiv'ring; and the beamless eye
 No more with ardor bright; you heard the groans
 Of agonizing ships from shore to shore;
 Heard nightly plunged, amid the sullen waves,
 The frequent corse.

All the circumstances here selected, contribute to augment this dismal scene. But the last image, containing the circumstance of dead bodies being thrown overboard every night, is by far the most striking in the picture.

In genius, Cowper is not equal to Thomson, but he has much more taste. His range is neither so wide, nor so lofty, but, as far as it extends, it is peculiarly his own. He cannot paint the plague, or the snow-storm, or the earthquake, as Thomson has done; but accompany him in his 'winter walk at noon,' or follow him in his ramble through his flower garden, and where is his equal to be found? His pictures of domestic life, too, are inimitable. He does not attempt the same variety of scene that Thomson did; but

Of the style what is remarked; yet what follows; and why? What is farther remarked of him? Whence might several beautiful descriptions be selected; but why shall we at present produce a passage of another kind? What are the circumstances that led to the passage; and what is it? Of this passage, what is remarked? How does Cowper compare with Thomson; and what remark follows? In what does Thomson excel him; but where is he unequalled? What does he not attempt; and what follows?

in what he does attempt he is always successful. Though the grander features of nature may be beyond his grasp, yet the meadow and the hay-field, the rippling rill and the flower crowned porch, he places before our eyes with astonishing accuracy. Sometimes, too, he takes a flight beyond his ordinary reach; and his personification of Winter is powerful, and even sublime:

Oh Winter! ruler of the inverted year!
Thy scatter'd hair, with sleet-like ashes fill'd,
Thy breath congeal'd upon thy lips, thy cheek
Fringed with a beard made white with other snows
Than those of age, thy forehead wrapt in clouds,
A leafless branch thy sceptre, and thy throne
A sliding car, indebted to no wheels,
But urged by storms along its slippery way.

Cowper's minor poems are full of beauties of the most varied kind; and for pathos and feeling, his lines 'On his Mother's Picture,' are absolutely unrivalled.

Mr. Parnell's tale of the Hermit, is, throughout the whole of it, conspicuous for beautiful descriptive narration. The setting forth of the hermit to visit the world, his meeting with a companion, the houses in which they are entertained, of the vain man, the covetous man, and the good man, are pieces of highly finished painting. But the richest and the most remarkable of all the descriptive poems in the English language, are the *Allegro* and *Penseroso* of Milton. They are the storehouse from whence succeeding poets have enriched their descriptions, and are to be considered as inimitably fine poems. Take, for instance, the following passage from the *Penseroso*:

————— I walk unseen
On the dry, smooth-shaven green,
To behold the wandering moon,
Riding near her highest noon:
Like one that had been led astray
Through the heaven's wide pathless way,
And oft, as if her head she bow'd,
Stooping through a fleecy cloud.
Oft, on a plat of rising ground,
I hear the far-off curfew sound,
Over some wide watered shore,
Swinging slow with solemn roar;

! What may be beyond his grasp; yet what can he place before our eyes with astonishing accuracy? What, too, does he sometimes do; what instance is given; and what also is said of his minor poems? What is said of Mr. Parnell's Tale of the Hermit; and in it, what are pieces of highly finished painting? Of Milton's *Allegro* and *Penseroso*, what is remarked; and as an illustration of this remark, what passage is given?

Or, if the air will not permit,
 Some still removed place will fit,
 Where glowing embers through the room
 Teach light to counterfeit a gloom;
 Far from all resort of mirth,
 Save the cricket on the hearth,
 Or the bellman's drowsy charm,
 To bless the doors from nightly harm;
 Or let my lamp, at midnight hour,
 Be seen, in some high lonely tower,
 Exploring Plato to unfold
 What worlds, or what vast regions hold
 Th' immortal mind, that hath forsook
 Her mansion in his fleshly nook;
 And of those demons that are found
 In fire, in air, in flood, or under ground.

All here is particular, picturesque, expressive, and concise. The picture is presented to the reader in one strong point of view; and the impression made is lively and interesting.

Both Homer and Virgil excel in poetical description. In the second *Æneid*, the sacking of Troy is so particularly described, that the reader finds himself in the midst of the scene. The death of Priam is a master-piece of description. Homer's battles are wonderful, and universally known. Ossian, too, paints in strong colors, and is remarkable for touching the heart. He thus portrays the ruins of Balclutha: 'I have seen the walls of Balclutha, but they were desolate. The fire had resounded within the halls; and the voice of the people is now heard no more. The stream of Clutha was removed from its place, by the fall of the walls; the thistle shook there its lonely head; the moss whistled to the wind. The fox looked out of the window; the rank grass waived round his head. Desolate is the dwelling of Moina; silence is in the house of her fathers.'

Much of the beauty of descriptive poetry depends upon a proper choice of epithets. With regard to this, poets are too often careless; and hence the multitude, in constant use, that are both unmeaning and redundant. Every epithet should add a new idea to the word which it qualifies. To observe that water is liquid, and that snow is white, is little better than mere tautology. But the propriety and advantage,

What is said of this passage? What two ancient poets excel in poetical description; and in the latter what instances are mentioned? Of Ossian, too, what is remarked; and what illustration follows? On what does much of the beauty of descriptive poetry depend; and with regard to this, what remarks follow?

of an ingenious selection of epithets, will appear best from an example; and the following lines from Milton, afford one:

————Who shall tempt with wand'ring feet
The dark, unbottomed, infinite abyss,
And through the palpable obscure, find out
His uncouth way? or spread his airy flight,
Upborne with indefatigable wings,
Over the vast abrupt?

It is obvious that the description here is greatly assisted by the epithets. The wand'ring feet—the unbottomed abyss—the palpable obscure—the uncouth way—the indefatigable wing, are all very happy expressions.

To illustrate these remarks, what passage is given from Milton; and what is observed of it?

ANALYSIS.

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| <p>1. Didactic poetry.</p> <p>A. The manner of its execution.</p> <p>a. To be rendered interesting.</p> <p>b. Proper order essential.</p> <p>c. The episodes to be skilfully connected with the main subject.</p> <p>B. Didactic writers of eminence.</p> <p>a. Akenside—Armstrong.</p> <p>b. Young.</p> <p>c. Goldsmith and Campbell.</p> | <p>C. Satires and poetical epistles.</p> <p>2. Descriptive poetry.</p> <p>A. The selection of circumstances.</p> <p>B. Distinguished descriptive poets.</p> <p>a. Thomson—Cowper.]</p> <p>b. Parnell—Milton.</p> <p>c. Homer—Virgil—Ossian.</p> <p>C. The choice of epithets.</p> |
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LECTURE XXXVIII.

THE POETRY OF THE HEBREWS.

Among the various kinds of poetry which we are, at present, examining, that of the Scriptures justly deserves a place. Viewing these sacred books in no higher light, than as they present to us the most ancient monuments of poetry at present extant, they afford a curious object of criticism. They display the taste of a remote age and country; and exhibit a species of composition, very different from any other with which we are acquainted, and at the same time, beautiful. Considered as inspired writings, they give rise to discussions of another kind. But it is our business, at present, to consider them in a critical view; and it is a source of great pleasure, to find the beauty and dignity of the composition, adequate to the weight and importance of the matter. In pursuing this subject, we shall follow Dr. Lowth's learned treatise, on 'The Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews.'

Few arguments are necessary to show, that among the books of the Old Testament, there appears such a diversity in style, as sufficiently discovers, which of them are to be considered as poetical, and which as prose compositions. While the historical books, and legislative writings of Moses, are evidently prosaic in the composition, the book of Job, the Psalms of David, the Song of Solomon, the Lamentations of Jeremiah, a great part of the prophetic writings, and several passages scattered through the historical books, carry the most plain and distinguishing marks of poetical writing.

Poetry was cultivated among the Hebrews from the earliest times; but in its general construction, Hebrew poetry is peculiar to itself. It consists in dividing every period into correspondent, for the most part into equal numbers,

Among the various kinds of poetry that we are at present examining, what deserves a place; and in what view do these sacred books afford a curious object of criticism? What do they display; and what exhibit? But how is it our business, at present, to consider them; and what remark follows? To show what, are few arguments necessary; and how is this remark illustrated? What is remarked of Hebrew poetry; and in what does it consist?

which answer to one another, both in sense and sound. In the first member of the period a sentiment is expressed ; and in the second member, the same sentiment is amplified, or is repeated in different terms, or sometimes contrasted with its opposite ; but in such a manner, that the same structure, and nearly the same number of words, is preserved. This is the general strain of Hebrew poetry ; instances of which occur every where in the Old Testament. Thus, in the XCVIth Psalm : ‘Sing unto the Lord a new song—sing unto the Lord all the earth. Sing unto the Lord, and bless his name—show forth his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the heathen—his wonders among all the people. For the Lord is great, and greatly to be praised—he is to be feared above all the gods. Honor and majesty are before him—strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.’ It is owing, in a great measure, to this form of composition, that our version, though in prose, retains so much of a poetical cast ; for the version being strictly word for word after the original, the form and order of the original sentences are still preserved.

This form of poetical composition among the Hebrews, is clearly to be deduced from the manner in which their sacred hymns were sung. They were accompanied with music, and they were performed by choirs or bands of singers and musicians, who answered alternately to each other. When, for instance, one band began the hymn thus : ‘The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice ;’ the chorus, or semi-chorus, took up the corresponding versicle ; ‘Let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof.’—‘Clouds and darkness are round about him,’ sung the one ; the other replied, ‘Judgment and righteousness are the habitation of his throne.’ And in this manner their poetry, when set to music, naturally divided itself into a succession of strophes and antistrophes, correspondent to each other ; whence, it is probable, the responsory, in the public religious service of some christian churches, derived its origin.

But independent of its peculiar mode of construction, the

How is this illustrated ; and what instance is given ? To this form what is owing ; and why ? From what is this form of composition among the Hebrews to be deduced ; and by what were they accompanied ? What instances are given to illustrate this remark ? How did their poetry naturally divide itself ; and from this, what, probably, derived its origin ? But independent of its mode of construction, by what is the Hebrew poetry distinguished ; and what are two of its most remarkable characters ?

sacred poetry is distinguished by the highest beauties of strong, concise, bold, and figurative expression. Conciseness and strength are two of its most remarkable characters. We might, indeed, at first imagine, that the practice of the Hebrew poets, of always amplifying the same thought by repetition or contrast, might tend to enfeeble their style. But this effect is not produced. Their sentences are always short; and there are no superfluous words. They never dwell long upon the same thought. To their conciseness of expression their poetry is indebted for much of its sublimity; and all writers who attempt the sublime, might profit much by imitating, in this respect, the style of the Old Testament.

No writings whatever abound so much with bold and animated figures, as the sacred books. But, through our early familiarity with the Scriptures, we are apt to overlook beauties in them, which, in any other book, would attract particular attention. Metaphors, comparisons, allegories, and personifications, occur there very frequently. In order to do justice to these, however, it is necessary that we transport ourselves, as much as possible, into the land of Judea; and place before our eyes that scenery, and those objects, with which the Hebrew writers were conversant. Some attention of this kind is requisite, in order to relish the writings of any poet of a foreign country, and a different age; for the imagery of every good poet is copied from nature, and from real life.

Natural objects are common, in some degree, to the Hebrews with the poets of all ages and countries. Light and darkness, trees and flowers, suggest to them many beautiful figures. But, in order to enjoy their figures of this kind, we must remember, that several of them arise from the particular circumstances of the land of Judea. During the summer months, little or no rain falls throughout all that region. While the heat continued, the country was intolerably parched: want of water was a great distress; and a

What might we at first imagine; but how does it appear that this effect is not produced? To what is their poetry indebted for much of its sublimity; and what remark follows? With what figures do the sacred books abound; but from our early familiarity with them, what results? What figures occur there very frequently; but in order to do justice to them, what is necessary? Why is some attention of this kind requisite, to relish the writings of any foreign poet? What are common to the Hebrews, with the poets of other countries; and what illustration follows? But in order to enjoy their figures of this kind, what must we remember; and how is this remark fully illustrated?

plentiful shower falling, or a rivulet breaking forth, altered the whole face of nature, and introduced much higher ideas of refreshment and pleasure, than the same causes can possibly suggest to us. Hence to represent distress, such frequent allusions were made by them to 'a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;' and hence to describe a change from distress to prosperity, their metaphors are founded on the falling of showers, and the bursting out of springs in the desert. Thus in Isaiah: 'The wilderness and solitary place shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. For in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert; and the parched ground shall become a pool; and the thirsty land, springs of water; in the habitations of dragons there shall be grass, with rushes and reeds.'

Of the mountains of Judea, the two most remarkable were Lebanon and Carmel—the former noted for its height, and the woods of lofty cedars that covered it; the latter, for its beauty and fertility, and the richness of its vines and olives. Hence, with the greatest propriety, Lebanon is employed as an image of whatever is great, strong, or magnificent; Carmel, of what is smiling and beautiful. 'The glory of Lebanon,' says Isaiah, 'shall be given to it, and the excellency of Carmel.' Lebanon is often put metaphorically for the temple, or for the whole state or people of Israel; Carmel, for the blessings of peace and prosperity. 'His countenance is as Lebanon,' says Solomon, speaking of the dignity of man's appearance; but when he describes female beauty, 'Thine head is like mount Carmel.' In images of the awful and terrible kind, with which the sacred poets abound, they plainly draw their descriptions from that violence of the elements, and those concussions of nature, with which their climate rendered them familiar. Earthquakes were frequent; and the tempests of hail, thunder, and lightning, in Judea, accompanied with whirlwinds and darkness, far exceed any thing of that sort which happens in more temperate regions.

Hence, what follows; and what illustration is also given from Isaiah? Which were the two most remarkable mountains of Judea; and for what were they respectively noted? Hence, with the greatest propriety, what is done; and what illustrations are given from Isaiah, and from Solomon? Whence do they draw their images of the awful and the terrible kind also; and how is this illustrated?

Besides the natural objects of their country, the rites of their religion, and the arts and employments of their common life, were frequently employed as grounds of imagery among the Hebrews. They were chiefly occupied with agriculture and pasturage. These were arts held in high honor among them—not even disdained by their patriarchs, kings, and prophets. Little addicted to commerce; separated from the rest of the world by their laws and their religion; they were, during the better days of their state, strangers, in a great measure, to the refinements of luxury. Hence, naturally flowed, the many allusions to pastoral life—to the ‘green pastures and the still waters,’ and to the care and watchfulness of a shepherd over his flock, which convey, to this day, so much beauty and tenderness in them, in the XXIII^d Psalm, and in many other passages of the poetical writings of Scripture. Hence, all the images founded upon rural employments, upon the winepress, the threshing-floor, the stubble and the chaff; and to disrelish such images, is the effect of false delicacy.

The comparisons employed by the sacred poets are generally short, touching on one point of resemblance only. In this respect, they have the advantage over the Greek and Roman authors; whose comparisons, from their length, sometimes interrupt the narration, and carry visible marks of study and labor. But in the Hebrew poets, they appear more like the glowings of a lively fancy, just glancing aside to some resembling object, and soon returning to its track. Such is the following fine comparison, in which the influence of a good government upon a people, is described. ‘He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God; and he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth; even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth, by clear shining after the rain.’ This is one of the most regular and formal comparisons in the sacred books.

Allegory, likewise, is a figure frequently found in them.

Besides the natural objects of their country, what were frequently employed as grounds of imagery among the Hebrews? Of their habits, occupations, and situation, what is remarked; and hence what allusions naturally flowed? Hence, also, what images; and of what is the disrelish of such images the effect? Of the comparisons employed by the sacred poets, what is remarked; and how do they compare with those employed by the Greeks and Romans? How is this illustrated; and what example is given from Isaiah? Of allegory, what instance was formerly given; and what is observed of it?

When formerly treating of this figure, we gave for an instance of it, that remarkably fine and well supported allegory, which occurs in the LXXXth Psalm, in which the people of Israel are compared to a vine. Of parables, which are a species of allegory, the prophetic writings are full; and if to us they sometimes appear obscure, we must remember, that in those early times, it was the universal mode throughout all the eastern nations, to convey sacred truths under mysterious figures and representations.

But the figure which, beyond all others, elevates the poetical style of the Scriptures, is personification. The personifications of the Scriptures exceed, in boldness and sublimity, every thing that can be found in other poems. This is more particularly the case when any appearance or operation of the Almighty is concerned. 'Before him went the pestilence—the waters saw thee, O God, and were afraid—the mountains saw thee, and they trembled—the overflowing of the water passed by—the deep uttered his voice, and lifted up his hands on high.' Indeed, the style of the poetical books of the Old Testament is, beyond the style of all other poetical works, fervid, bold, and animated. It is very different from that regular, correct expression, to which our ears are accustomed in modern poetry. It is the burst of inspiration. The scenes are not coolly described, but represented as passing before our eyes. Every object, and every person, is addressed and spoken to as if present. Bold sublimity, not correct elegance, is its character. We see the spirit of the writer raised beyond himself, and laboring to find vent for ideas too mighty for his utterance.

After these general remarks on the poetry of the Scriptures, we shall conclude this subject with a short account of the different kinds of poetical composition in the sacred books, and of the distinguishing characters of some of the chief writers.

The several kinds of poetical composition found in Scripture, are chiefly the didactic, elegiac, pastoral, and lyric.

Of parables what is remarked; and if to us they sometimes appear obscure, what must we remember? What figure is it that most elevates the poetical style of the Scriptures; and what is remarked of them? When is this more particularly the case; and what example is given? In what respects does the style of the poetical books of the Old Testament surpass the style of all other poetical works; and how is this fully illustrated? After these general remarks, with what shall we conclude this subject? What are the several kinds of poetical composition found in Scripture?

Of the didactic species of poetry, the book of Proverbs is the principal instance. The first nine chapters of that book are highly poetical, adorned with many distinguished graces and figures of expression. At the tenth chapter the style is sensibly altered, and descends into a lower strain, which is continued to the end. Of elegiac poetry, many very beautiful specimens occur in Scripture; such as the lamentation of David over his friend Jonathan; several passages in the prophetic books; and several of David's Psalms, composed on occasions of distress and mourning. But the most regular and perfect elegiac composition in the Scripture, and, perhaps, ever composed, is the book entitled the Lamentation of Jeremiah. As the prophet mourns over the destruction of the temple, and the holy city, and the overthrow of the whole state, he assembles all the affecting images which a subject so melancholy could possibly suggest.

The Song of Solomon affords us a high exemplification of pastoral poetry. In its form, it is a dramatic pastoral, or a continued dialogue between personages in the character of shepherds; and suitably to that form, it is full of rural and pastoral images throughout. Of lyric poetry, the Old Testament is full. Besides a great number of hymns and songs, scattered in the historical and prophetic books, the whole book of Psalms is to be considered as a collection of sacred odes. In these we find the ode exhibited in all the varieties of its form, and supported with the highest spirit of lyric poetry; sometimes sprightly, cheerful, and triumphant; sometimes solemn and magnificent; and sometimes tender and soft.

With regard to the composers of the sacred books, it is obvious that there is great diversity, both in style and manner. Of the sacred poets, the most eminent are, the author of the book of Job, David, and Isaiah. In the compositions of David, there is a great variety in the style and manner. In the pleasing, the soft, and the tender, he excels. In his Psalms there are many lofty and sublime

Of the didactic, what is the principal instance; and what is remarked of it? What instances of elegiac poetry are found in Scripture; and what is particularly remarked of the Lamentations of Jeremiah? Of what kind does the Song of Solomon afford an exemplification; and what is said of it? Of the lyric poetry what is remarked; and what is said of the Psalms? With regard to the compositions of the sacred books, what is obvious; and of the sacred poets who are the most eminent? What is said of the compositions of David; and in what Psalms does he affect us most?

passages; but in strength of description he yields to Job, in sublimity, to Isaiah. The Psalms in which he affects us most, are those in which he describes the happiness of the righteous, or the goodness of God; expresses the tender breathings of a devout mind, or sends up moving and affectionate supplications to Heaven.

Isaiah is, without exception, the most sublime of all poets. Majesty is his reigning character; and in his conceptions and expressions, he possesses a dignity and grandeur, which is altogether unparalleled, and peculiar to himself. When we compare him with the rest of the poetical prophets, we immediately see in Jeremiah a very different genius. Isaiah employs himself, generally, on magnificent subjects. Jeremiah seldom discovers any disposition to be sublime, and inclines always to the tender and elegiac. Ezekiel, in poetical grace and elegance, is much inferior to them both; but he is distinguished by a character of uncommon force and ardor. Bishop Lowth compares Isaiah to Homer, Jeremiah to Simonides, and Ezekiel to Æschylus.

The book of Job remains to be noticed. It is known to be extremely ancient, and the author of it is uncertain. It is remarkable that this book has no connection with the affairs or manners of the Jews or Hebrews. The poetry of it, however, is not only equal to that of any other of the sacred writings, but is superior to them all, Isaiah excepted. It abounds in a peculiar glow of fancy, and in metaphor. The author renders whatever he treats of, visible. The scene is laid in the land of Uz, or Idumæa; and the imagery employed in it differs from that which was before observed to be peculiar to the Hebrew poets.

What is observed of Isaiah; and how does he compare with the rest of the poetical prophets. Of Jeremiah, and of Ezekiel, what is remarked? Repeat the following observations on the book of Job.

ANALYSIS.

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| 1. Introductory remarks. | a. Illustrated. |
| 2. The diversity of style of the Old Testament. | C. Religious rites, &c. employed. |
| 3. The peculiar construction of Hebrew poetry. | D. Comparisons. |
| A. Its origin. | E. Allegory. |
| 4. Figurative language of the Scriptures. | F. Personification. |
| A. Its boldness. | 5. The different kinds of Hebrew poetry. |
| B. Imagery peculiar to themselves. | A. Distinguished Hebrew poets. |
| | B. The book of Job. |

LECTURE XXXIX.

EPIC POETRY.

It now remains to treat of the two higher kinds of poetical writing—the epic and the dramatic. In this lecture we shall examine the general principles of epic composition; after which we shall take a view of the character and genius of the most celebrated epic poets.

Of all poetical works, the epic poem is uniformly allowed to be the most dignified, and, at the same time, the most difficult of execution. To contrive a story which shall, at once, be entertaining, important, and instructive; to fill it with suitable incidents; to enliven it with a variety of characters and of descriptions; and, throughout a long work, to maintain that propriety of sentiment, and that elevation of style, which the epic requires, is unquestionably the highest effort of poetical genius. Hence so very few have succeeded in the attempt, that some critics will hardly allow any other poems to bear the name of epic, besides the *Iliad* and the *Æneid*.

An epic poem may be defined to be, the recital of some illustrious enterprise in a poetical form. In this definition, which is sufficiently exact, are included, besides the two illustrious works already mentioned, Lucan's *Pharsalia*, Tasso's *Jerusalem*, Camoens' *Lusiad*, Fenelon's *Telemachus*, Voltaire's *Henriade*, and Milton's *Paradise Lost*. These are all epics, because they are poetical recitals of great adventures; which is all that is meant by this denomination of poetry.

Though it may not be allowed that it is the essence of an epic poem to be wholly an allegory, or a fable contrived to illustrate some moral truth, yet no poetry is certainly of a more moral nature than this. Its effect in promoting virtue, is not to be measured by any one maxim, or instruction,

What now remains to be treated of; and in this lecture, what shall we do? Of the epic poem, what is uniformly allowed; and what is unquestionably the highest effort of poetical genius? Hence what has followed? What is the definition of an epic poem; in this definition what are included; and why? Of the morality of the epic poem, as remarked; and what is observed of its effect in promoting virtue?

which results from the whole story, but it arises from the impression which the parts of the poem separately, as well as the whole taken together, make upon the mind of the reader—from the great examples which it sets before us, and the high sentiments with which it warms our hearts. The end which it proposes is to extend our ideas of human perfection, and to excite our admiration. Valor, truth, justice, fidelity, friendship, piety, and magnanimity, are, consequently, presented to our minds in it, under the most splendid and honorable colors. In behalf of virtuous personages our affections are engaged; in their designs and their distresses, we are interested; the generous and public affections are awakened; the mind is purified from sensual and mean pursuits, and accustomed to take part in great heroic enterprises.

It is, indeed, no small testimony in honor of virtue, that several of the most refined and elegant entertainments of mankind, such as that species of poetical composition which we are now considering, must be grounded on moral sentiments and impressions. This is a testimony of such weight, that, were it in the power of skeptical philosophers to weaken the force of those reasonings which establish the essential distinctions between vice and virtue, the writings of epic poets alone, would be sufficient to refute their false philosophy—showing, by that appeal which they constantly make to the feelings of mankind in favor of virtue, that the foundations of it are laid deep and strong in human nature.

The general strain and spirit of epic composition, sufficiently distinguish it from the other kinds of poetry. In pastoral writing, the reigning idea is innocence and tranquillity; and of tragedy, the great object is compassion: but the predominant character of the epic is, admiration excited by heroic actions. It is sufficiently distinguished from history, both by its poetical form, and the liberty of fiction which it assumes. It requires, more than any other species of poetry, a grave, equal, and supported dignity. It takes in a greater compass of time and action, than dramatic writing admits; and thereby allows a more full display of

What is the end which it proposes; and what consequence follows? Illustrative of this, what is farther observed? What is no small testimony in honor of virtue; and of this testimony what is remarked? What sufficiently distinguishes epic composition from the other kinds of poetry; and how is this illustrated? By what is it sufficiently distinguished from history; and what does it require? How does it compare with dramatic writing; and what follows?

characters. Dramatic writings display characters chiefly by means of sentiments and passions; epic poetry, chiefly by means of actions. The emotions, therefore, which it raises, are not so violent, but they are more prolonged.

Having thus given the general characteristics of the epic poem, we shall next consider this species of composition under three heads: first, with respect to the subject, or action; secondly, with respect to the actors, or characters; and lastly, with respect to the narration of the poet.

The action or subject of the epic poem, must have three properties; it must be one; it must be great; it must be interesting.

First, the poet must choose one action, or enterprise, for his subject. Aristotle, with great propriety, insists upon this as essential to epic poetry; and it is, indeed, the most material of all his rules respecting it. For it is certain that, in the recital of heroic adventures, several scattered and independent facts can never affect a reader so deeply, nor engage his attention so strongly, as a tale that is one and connected, where the several incidents hang upon one another, and are all made to conspire for the accomplishment of one end. In a regular epic, the more sensible this unity is rendered to the imagination, the better will the effect be; and, for this reason, it is not sufficient for the poet to confine himself to the actions of one man, or to those which happened during a certain period of time; but the unity must lie in the subject itself, and arise from all the parts combined into one whole.

In all the great epic poems, unity of action is sufficiently apparent. Virgil, for instance, has chosen for his subject, the establishment of Æneas in Italy. From the beginning to the end of the poem, this object is ever in our view, and links all the parts of it together with full connection. The unity of the Odyssey is of the same nature—the return and re-establishment of Ulysses in his own country. The subject of Tasso is the recovery of Jerusalem from the infidels; that of Milton, the expulsion of our first parents from Para-

Having thus given the general characteristics of epic poetry, under what three heads do we next proceed to consider it? What three properties must the action of the epic poem have? First, what must the poet do; what is said of this; and why? Of this unity in a regular epic, what is observed; for this reason what is not sufficient; and where must the unity lie? How does it appear that in all the great epic poems, unity of action is sufficiently apparent?

dise ; and both of them are unexceptionable in the unity of the story. The professed subject of the *Iliad* is the anger of Achilles, with the consequences which it produced. But as Achilles is frequently out of sight, it must be confessed that the unity is not so sensible to the imagination in this poem as in the *Æneid*.

It is not, however, to be understood, that the unity of the epic action is to exclude all episodes. On the contrary, the epic poem would be cold without them. What we now understand by episodes is, certain actions or incidents introduced into the narration, connected with the principal action, yet not of such importance as to destroy, if they had been omitted, the main subject of the poem. Of this nature are the interview of Hector with Andromache, in the *Iliad* ; the story of Nisus and Euryalus, in the *Æneid* ; and the prospect of his descendant exhibited to Adam, in the last books of *Paradise Lost*.

In the use of episodes, the following rules must be observed : First, they must be naturally introduced, and have such connection with the main subject of the poem, as to seem inferior parts that belong to it. The episode of Olinda and Sophronia, in the second book of Tasso's *Jerusalem*, transgresses this rule. It is too much detached from the rest of the work ; and being introduced so near the opening of the poem, misleads the reader into an expectation that it is to be of some future consequence, whereas it proves to be connected with nothing that follows. In the next place, episodes ought to present to us objects of a different kind from those which go before, and those which follow in the course of the poem. For, it is principally for the sake of variety, that episodes are introduced into epic composition. In so long a work, they tend to diversify the subject, and to relieve the reader by changing the scene. In the midst of combats, therefore, a martial episode would not be appropriate ; but Hector's visit to Andromache, affords a pleasing retreat from camps and battles. Lastly, as an episode is a

What is the professed subject of the *Iliad* ; and what is remarked of it ? What is not, however, to be understood ; why ; and what do we now understand by episodes ? Of this nature are what episodes ? In the use of episodes, what is the first rule to be observed ? What episode transgresses this rule ; and why ? In the next place, what should episodes present to us ; why ; and what remark follows ? What illustration is given ? In the last place, what should be the character of episodes ; and what follows ?

professed embellishment, it ought to be particularly elegant and well finished ; and, accordingly, it is, for the most part, in pieces of this kind, that poets put forth their strength.

The second property of the epic action is, that it be great—that it have sufficient splendor and importance, both to fix our attention, and to justify the magnificent apparatus which the poet bestows upon it. This is so evidently requisite, that all who have attempted epic poetry, have succeeded in choosing some subject sufficiently important, either by the nature of the action, or by the fame of the personages concerned in it. It contributes to the grandeur of the epic subject, that it be not of modern date, nor fall within any period of history with which we are intimately acquainted. Both Lucan and Voltaire have, in the choice of their subjects, transgressed this rule. The former does not please by confining himself too strictly to historical truth ; and the latter has improperly mingled well known events, with fiction. Hence they exhibit not that greatness which the epic requires.

The third property required in an epic poem is, that it be interesting. It is not sufficient for this purpose that it be great ; for deeds of mere valor, however heroic, may prove cold and tiresome. Much will depend upon the happy choice of some subject, which shall, by its nature, interest the public ; as when the poet selects for his hero, one who is the founder, the deliverer, or the favorite of his country. But the chief circumstance which renders an epic poem interesting, and which tends to interest, not one age or country alone, but all readers, is the skilfull management of the subject. The author must so contrive his plan, as that it shall comprehend many affecting incidents. He must not perpetually dazzle us with valiant achievements ; but he must study to touch our hearts. He may sometimes be awful and august ; but he must often be tender and pathetic. The more an epic poem abounds with situations which awaken the feelings of humanity, the more interesting it is ;

What is the second property of the epic action ? That this is indispensably requisite, what proof have we ? What contributes to the grandeur of the epic subject ; and who have transgressed this rule ? Why do they not please ; and hence what follows ? What is the third property required in an epic poem ? For this purpose what is not sufficient ; why ; and on what will much depend ? But what is the chief circumstance which renders an epic poem interesting ; and how is this illustrated ? What must he not, and what must he do ? In proportion to what is an epic poem interesting ; and what remark follows ?

and these always form the favorite passages of the work. To render the epic interesting, great care must also be employed with respect to the character of the herces. He must rouse our attention by a prospect of the difficulties which seem to threaten disappointment to their enterprises; he must make these difficulties grow and thicken upon us by degrees; till after having kept us for some time in a state of agitation and suspense, he paves the way, by a proper preparation of incidents, for the winding up of the plot, in a natural and probable manner.

Critics have generally inclined to think that the epic poem should conclude happily; and this seems to be natural. An unhappy conclusion depresses the mind, and is opposed to the elevating emotions which belong to this species of poetry. Terror and compassion are the proper subjects of tragedy; but as the epic poem is of larger compass and extent, it would be too much, if after the difficulties and troubles which commonly abound in the progress of the poem, that the author should bring them all at last to an unfortunate issue. Accordingly, the general practice of epic poets is on the side of a prosperous conclusion; not, however, without some exceptions. For two authors of great name—Lucan and Milton, have followed a contrary course; the one concluding with the subversion of Roman liberty, and the other with the expulsion of man from Paradise.

With regard to the time of the epic action, no precise boundaries can be ascertained. A considerable extent is always allowed to it, as it does not necessarily depend on those violent passions which can be supposed to have only a short continuance. Of the *Iliad*, the action, according to Bossu, lasts no longer than forty-seven days. The action of the *Odyssey* extends to eight years and a half; and that of the *Æneid* includes about six years.

From the action of the epic, we proceed to the actors or personages. The personages in an epic poem should be

To render the epic interesting, about what, also, must great care be taken; and how is this fully illustrated? What have critics generally inclined to think; and why does this seem natural? Of what are terror and compassion the proper subjects; but of the epic what is remarked? Accordingly, what has been the general practice; but to this, what exceptions have we? With regard to the time of the epic action, what is remarked; and why is considerable extent allowed to it? What is the time of the *Iliad*, of the *Odyssey*, and of the *Æneid*? From the action, to what do we proceed; and of them what is remarked?

proper and well supported. They should display the features of human nature; and admit of different degrees of virtue and turpitude. But whatever the character be which a poet gives to any of his actors, he must be careful to preserve it uniform and consistent throughout. Poetic characters are of two sorts—general and particular. General characters are such as are wise, brave, and virtuous, without any farther distinction. Particular characters express the species of bravery, of wisdom, or of virtue, for which any one is eminent. They exhibit the peculiar features which distinguish one individual from another, and which mark the difference of the same moral quality in different men, according as it is combined with other dispositions in their temper. In this discrimination of characters, Homer excels. Tasso approaches the nearest to him in this respect; but here, Virgil is greatly deficient.

Among epic poets, it is the practice to select some particular personage as the hero. This is considered essential to epic composition, and is attended with several advantages. It renders the unity of the subject more sensible, when there is one principal figure, to which, as to a centre, all the rest refer. It tends to interest us more in the enterprise which is carried on; and it gives the poet an opportunity of exerting his talents to adorn and display one character with peculiar splendor. It has been asked, Who then is the hero of *Paradise Lost*? The devil, it has been answered by some critics; and, in consequence of this idea, much ridicule has been thrown upon Milton. But they have mistaken that author's intention, by proceeding upon the supposition, that in the conclusion of the poem, the hero must necessarily be triumphant. But Milton has given a tragical conclusion to his poem; and has evidently made Adam his hero.

In epic poetry, besides human characters, gods and supernatural beings are introduced. This forms what is called the machinery of the epic; and the French suppose it essential to this species of poetry. They conceive, that in every

Poetic characters are of what two sorts; and what is said of each? What do the latter exhibit; and in this particular what is said of Homer, Tasso, and Virgil? Among epic poets, what practice has prevailed; and what advantages result from it? Who is the hero of Milton's *Paradise Lost*? In epic poetry, what besides human characters have been introduced; and what does this form? Why do the French think this essential to epic poetry; but why does there seem to be no solid reason for their opinion?

epic, the main action ought to be carried on by the intervention of the gods. But there seems to be no solid reason for their opinion. Lucan's poem is very spirited, and certainly epic; but neither gods nor supernatural beings are employed in it. But if machinery be not absolutely necessary to the epic poem, it ought not to be totally excluded. The marvellous has a great charm for the generality of readers. It gratifies and fills the imagination, and affords opportunity for much sublime description. At the same time, it becomes the poet to be temperate in the use of supernatural beings; and to employ the religious faith or superstition of his country in such a way, as to give an air of probability to events, that are most contrary to the ordinary course of nature.

With regard to allegorical personages, such as Fame, Discord, Love, and such like, they always form the worst possible machinery. In description they may be allowed; but they should never bear any part in the action of the poem. As they are only mere names of general ideas, they ought not to be considered as persons, and cannot mingle with human actions, without an unseemly confusion of shadows with realities.

As to the narration of the epic poem, it is of little consequence whether it proceeds in the character of the poet or in the person of some of the actors. It is to be observed, however, that if the narrative be given by any of the actors, it affords the poet the advantage of spreading out such parts of the subject as he inclines to dwell upon in person, and of comprehending the rest within a short recital.

But why should not machinery be totally excluded from it? At the same time, what does it become the poet to do? What is observed of allegorical personages; and how is this illustrated? What two courses may be pursued in narration; and what are the advantages of the latter?

ANALYSIS.

Epic poetry.

1. The definition of an epic poem.
 - A. Its design.
2. The character of the epic.
 - A. Unity in the action.
 - a. Illustrated.
 - b. Episodes—their requisites.
 - B. The action to be great.

- C. To be interesting also.
 - a. The close.
- D. The time of the action.
3. The personages.
 - A. The hero.
 - B. The machinery.
4. The narration.

LECTURE XL.

HOMER'S ILIAD AND ODYSSEY—VIRGIL'S ÆNEID—LUCAN'S PHARSALIA.

As the epic poem is universally allowed to possess the highest rank among poetical works, it merits a particular discussion. Having treated of the nature of this composition, and the principal rules that relate to it, we proceed to make some observations on the most distinguished epic poems, both ancient and modern.

Homer, as the father of epic poetry, claims the first rank. In order to relish his poems, we must remember that they are the oldest writings extant, except the Bible. We must also divest ourselves of all modern ideas of dignity, and transport our imaginations back, almost three thousand years in the history of mankind. What we are to expect is a picture of the ancient world. We must reckon upon finding characters and manners, that retain a considerable tincture of the savage state; moral ideas but imperfectly formed; and the appetites and passions of men brought under none of those restraints to which, in a more advanced state of society, they are accustomed. The distinguishing characteristics of Homeric poetry are, fire and simplicity; but in order to have a clear idea of his merit, it will be of advantage to consider the *Iliad* under the three heads of the subject and action, the characters, and the narration.

The subject of the *Iliad* is, unquestionably, happily chosen; for no subject could be more splendid than the Trojan war. A ten years' siege against Troy, and a great confederacy of the Grecian states, must have spread far the renown of many military exploits, and give an extensive interest in the heroes who were concerned in them. Upon these traditions Homer built his poem; and as he lived two or three centuries after

Why does the epic poem merit a particular discussion; and what remark follows? Who claims the first rank; and in order to relish his poems, what must we remember, and what must we do? What are we to expect; and upon what must we reckon? What are the distinguishing characteristics of Homeric poetry; but to have a clear idea of the *Iliad*, how must we consider it? Why was the subject of the *Iliad* happily chosen; and how is this remark illustrated? What gave Homer the liberty of intermingling fable with history; and what part of the war did he choose?

the circumstances related transpired, he had full liberty to intermingle fable with history. He chose not, however, the whole Trojan war for his subject; but selected, with great judgment, the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon, which includes the most interesting period of it. He has thus communicated the greater unity to his performance. He gained one hero, or principal character, that is, Achilles; and he shows the pernicious consequences of discord among confederate princes.

The praise of high invention has, in every age, been given to Homer, with the greatest reason. The prodigious number of incidents, of speeches, of characters divine and human, with which he abounds; the surprising variety with which he has diversified his battles, in the wounds, and deaths, and little history pieces of almost all the persons slain, discover an invention next to boundless. Nor is his judgment less worthy of admiration. His story is every where conducted with art. He rises upon us gradually. He introduces his heroes with exquisite skillfulness into our acquaintance. The distress thickens as the poem advances; and every thing is so contrived as to aggrandize Achilles, and to render him, as the poet intended he should be, the capital figure.

It is in the characteristical part of his writings, however, where Homer is without a rival. He abounds in dialogue and conversation, and this produces a spirited exhibition of his personages. It must, at the same time, be acknowledged, that if this dramatic method is often expressive and animated, it takes away, occasionally, from the gravity and majesty of the epic. For example, it may be observed, that some of the speeches of Homer are unseasonable, and others trifling. With the Greek vivacity, he has also the Greek loquacity.

Perhaps, in no character does he display greater art than in that of Helen. Notwithstanding her frailty and her crimes, he continues to make her an interesting object. The admiration with which the old generals behold her when she is coming towards them, presents her to us with much dignity. Her veiling herself and shedding tears in the presence

What advantage did this give him? What has, in every age, been given to Homer; and what discover an invention next to boundless? How does it appear that his judgment is not less worthy of admiration? Where, however, is Homer without a rival; with what does he abound; and what is its effect? What must, at the same time, be acknowledged; and what example is given? In what character does he display great art; and how is this illustrated? What exhibit the most striking features of that mixed female character, which we partly condemn, and partly pity?

of Priam, her grief and self-accusations at the sight of Menelaus, her upbraiding Paris for his cowardice, and at the same time, her returning fondness for him, exhibit the most striking feature of that mixed female character, which we partly condemn, and partly pity.

Paris himself, the author of all the mischief, is characterized with the utmost propriety. He is, as we should expect him to be, a mixture of gallantry and effeminacy. He retreats from Menelaus, on his first appearance; but immediately afterwards, enters into single combat with him. He is a great master of civility, remarkably courteous in his speeches; and receives all the reproofs of his brother Hector with modesty and deference. He is described as a person of elegant taste; and was even the architect of his own palace.

Homer has been charged with having made his hero, Achilles, of too brutal and unamiable a character. But this charge is evidently without foundation. Achilles was, indeed, passionate to a great degree; but he was far from being a contemner of laws and justice. In the contest with Agamemnon, though he may carry it on with too much heat, yet he had reason on his side; for it must be remembered, he had been notoriously wronged. Besides bravery and contempt of death, he had also the qualities of openness and sincerity. He loved his subjects, and respected the gods. He was strong in his friendships; and, throughout, he was high-spirited, gallant, and honorable.

Homer's gods make a great figure in the Iliad; but his machinery was not his own. He followed the traditions of his country. And though his machinery is often lofty and magnificent, yet it is true that his gods are sometimes deficient in dignity. They have all the human passions—they drink, they feast, and are vulnerable like men. While, however, he at times degrades his divinities, he knows how to make them appear with the most awful majesty. Jupiter, for the most part, is introduced with great dignity; and several sublime conceptions are founded on the appearances of Neptune, Minerva, and Apollo.

What is said of Paris; and how is this fully illustrated? With what has Homer been charged; but why is this charge without foundation? Besides bravery, what qualities did Achilles possess? What is remarked of Homer's machinery; and of his gods, what is observed? While at times he degrades his divinities, how do they often appear; and how is this illustrated?

With regard to the style or manner of Homer, it is easy, natural, and, in the highest degree, animated. He resembles, in simplicity, the poetical parts of the Old Testament. Those who are acquainted with him in Mr. Pope's translation only, can have no conception of his manner. That translation is, indeed, an excellent performance, and in the main, faithful to the original; but it is still nothing else than Homer modernized. Though, in some places, it may be thought to have improved Homer, yet, in the midst of the elegance and luxuriancy of Mr. Pope's language, we lose sight of the old bard's simplicity.

In the narration, Homer is concise and descriptive. He paints his objects, as it were, to our sight. His battles are admirable. We see them in all their hurry, terror, and confusion. His similes are thrown out in the greatest abundance; and many of them are extremely beautiful. His comparisons have also great merit; but they come upon us in too quick succession. They even serve, at times, to disturb the train of his narration. His lions, bulls, eagles, and herds of sheep, recur too frequently; and the allusions in some of his similes, even after the allowances that are to be made for ancient manners, must be admitted to be debasing.

Upon the subject of the *Odyssey*, the criticism of Longinus is not without foundation. He observes, that in this poem, Homer may be likened to the setting sun, whose grandeur remains without the heat of his meridian beams. In vigor and sublimity, it is inferior to the *Iliad*. It has, however, great beauties, and is confessedly a very amusing poem. It possesses much greater variety than the *Iliad*; and exhibits very pleasing pictures of ancient manners. Instead of the ferocity that pervades the *Iliad*, it presents us with amiable images of hospitality and humanity. It entertains us with many a wonderful adventure, and many a landscape of nature; and there is a rich vein of morality and virtue running through every part of the poem.

At the same time, it contains some defects which must be

With regard to Homer's style, what is observed; and what does he resemble? What is said of those who are acquainted with him in Mr. Pope's translation only; and of that translation what is observed? How is Homer in narration; and how is this illustrated? Of his similes and his comparisons, what is observed? Of the *Odyssey*, what says Longinus? Though in vigor and sublimity it is inferior to the *Iliad*, yet what beauties has it? At the same time what defects does it contain?

acknowledged. Many of its scenes are evidently below the level of the epic poem. The last twelve books, after Ulysses is landed in Ithaca, are, in many places, tedious and languid; and perhaps the poet is not happy in his discovery of Ulysses to Penelope. She is too cautious and distrustful; and we meet not that surprise of joy which was to have been expected on such an occasion.

After these remarks on the father of epic poetry, we proceed to Virgil, whose character is very different from that of Homer. As the distinguishing excellencies of the *Iliad* are simplicity and fire, those of the *Æneid* are elegance and tenderness. When we begin to read the *Iliad*, we find ourselves in the regions of the most remote and unrefined antiquity. When we open the *Æneid*, we discover all the correctness and refinement of the Augustan age. We meet with no contentions of heroes about a female slave—no violent scolding, nor abusive language. There reigns throughout the whole poem an uniform magnificence.

The subject of the *Æneid*, which is the establishment of Æneas in Italy, is extremely happy. Nothing could be more interesting to the Romans, than to look back to their origin from so famous a hero. And while the object was splendid itself, the traditionary history of his country opened an interesting field to the poet; and he could glance at all the future great exploits of the Romans, in its ancient and fabulous state.

With regard to the unity of action, it is, in the *Æneid*, perfectly well preserved. The settlement of Æneas, by the order of the gods, is constantly kept in view. The episodes are properly linked with the main subject. The *modus*, or intrigue of the poem, is happily managed. The wrath of Juno, who opposes Æneas, gives rise to all his difficulties, and connects the human with the celestial operations throughout the whole poem.

In these main parts, Virgil has conducted his work with great propriety, and shown his art and judgment; but it is not to be supposed that he is without his faults. One great

To what do we next proceed; how does he compare with Homer; and how is this illustrated? What is the subject of the *Æneid*; what is observed of it; why; and what remark follows? How does it appear that unity of action is perfectly well preserved in it? Though in those main parts Virgil has conducted his work with propriety; yet what is not to be supposed? What is one great imperfection in the *Æneid*; and of these respectively what is remarked?

imperfection of the Æneid is, that there are scarcely any marked characters in it. Achates, Cloanthas, Gyas, and other Trojan heroes who accompanied Æneas into Italy, are insipid figures. Even Æneas himself is not a very interesting hero. He is described, indeed, as pious and brave; but his character is not marked with any of those strokes that touch the heart. The character of Dido is by far the best supported in the whole work.

Besides this defect of character in the Æneid, the management of the subject is also exceptionable. The six last books received not the finishing hand of the author; and for this reason, he ordered his poem to be committed to the flames. The wars with the Latins are unimportant and uninteresting; and the reader is tempted to take part with Turnus against Æneas.

The principal excellence of Virgil is tenderness. His soul was full of sensibility. He must have felt himself all the affecting circumstances in the scenes he describes; and he knew how to touch the heart by a single stroke. In an epic poem, this merit is the next to sublimity. The second book of the Æneid is one of the greatest master-pieces that was ever executed. The death of old Priam, and the family pieces of Æneas, Anchises, and Creusa, are as tender as can be conceived. In the fourth book, the unhappy passion and death of Dido are admirable. The episodes of Pallas and Evander, of Nisus and Euryalus, of Lausus and Mezentius, are all extremely fine.

In his battles, Virgil is far inferior to Homer. But in the important episode, the descent into hell, he has surpassed Homer by many degrees. There is nothing in antiquity to equal the sixth book of the Æneid. The scenery, the objects, and the description, are great, solemn, and sublime. With regard to their comparative merit, it must be allowed, that Homer was the greater genius, and Virgil the more correct writer. Homer is more original, more bold, more sublime, and more forcible. In judgment, they are both eminent. Homer has all the Greek vivacity; Virgil all the

Besides this defect, what is observed of the management of the subject; and how is this illustrated? What is the principal excellence of Virgil; and what remark follows? In an epic poem, what rank does this merit hold; and what instances of this does this work contain? In his battles, how does Virgil compare with Homer; in what has he far excelled him; and what is observed of it? With regard to their comparative merit, what is observed?

Roman stateliness. The imagination of Homer is the most copious; that of Virgil, the most correct. The strength of the former lies in warming the fancy; that of the latter in touching the heart. Homer is more simple; Virgil more elegant.

After Homer and Virgil, the next great epic poet of ancient times, is Lucan. In his *Pharsalia*, there is little invention; and it is conducted in too historical a manner to be strictly epic. It may be arranged, however, under the epic class, as it treats of great and heroic adventures. The subject of the *Pharsalia* has sufficiently the epic dignity and grandeur; and it possesses also unity of object: for it points to the triumph of Cæsar over the Roman liberty.

But though the subject of Lucan is confessedly heroic, it is not happy. It has two defects. Civil wars present shocking objects to observation, and furnish melancholy pictures of human nature. These are not fit topics for the heroic muse. It was the unhappiness of Lucan's genius to delight in savage scenes, and to depict the most savage forms of atrocious cruelty. Another defect of Lucan's subject is, that it was too near the times in which he lived. This deprived him of the assistance which he might otherwise have derived from fiction and machinery. The facts upon which his poem is founded, were too well known, and too recent, to admit of fables, and the interposition of gods.

The characters of Lucan are drawn with spirit and force. But although Pompey is his hero, he has not been able to make him sufficiently interesting. He is not distinguished for either magnanimity or valor; and is always surpassed by Cæsar. Cato is a favorite character with Lucan; and he is very careful to make him, at all times, appear to great advantage.

In managing his story, Lucan confines himself too much to chronological order. This breaks the thread of his narration, and hurries him from place to place. He is, at the same time, too digressive; and indulges preposterously in geographical descriptions, and in philosophical disquisitions.

After Homer and Virgil, who is the next great epic poet of ancient times? What is said of his *Pharsalia*; and why may it be ranked under the epic class? What is said of the subject of Lucan; and what is the first? What was the other defects; of what did this deprive him; and why? How are Lucan's characters drawn; and of Pompey and Cato what is remarked? What are the defects in the management of his story?

It must, notwithstanding, be allowed, that there are splendid passages in the *Pharsalia*; but the strength of this poet does not lie either in narration or description. His narration is often dry and harsh, and his descriptions overwrought. His chief merit consists in his sentiments. They are noble, striking, glowing, and ardent. He is the most philosophical, and the most patriotic poet of ancient times. He was a stoic; and the spirit of that philosophy pervades his work. He is elevated and bold; and his feelings were keen and warm.

As his vivacity and fire are great, he is apt to be carried away by them. Indeed, his great defect is want of moderation. He never knows how to stop. When he would aggrandize his objects, he is unnatural and tumid. His taste is marked with the corruption of his age; and instead of poetry, he often exhibits declamation.

On the whole, however, he must be allowed the praise of liveliness and originality. His high sentiments and his fire seem to atone for his various defects. His genius had strength, but was without tenderness or amenity. Compared with Virgil, he may be allowed to have more fire and higher sentiments, but in every thing else falls infinitely below him.

What must still be allowed; and of his narration and description what is observed? In what does his chief merit consist; what is said of these; and what remark follows? What is his great defect; and how is this illustrated? What must he be allowed; what remarks follow; and how does he compare with Virgil?

ANALYSIS.

Homer.

1. The *Iliad*.
 - A. The subject happy.
 - B. The poet's invention.
 - C. His characters.
 - a. Helen—Paris—Achilles.
 - D. The style.
 - E. The narration.

2. The *Odyssey*. Virgil.

1. The *Æneid*.
 - A. The subject.
 - a. Its unity.
 - B. Virgil's defects.
 - C. His excellencies.
2. Homer and Virgil compared.
Lucan.
 1. His *Pharsalia*.
 - A. The subject defective.
 - B. Its general character.

LECTURE XLI.

TASSO'S JERUSALEM—CAMOENS' LUSIAD—
FENELON'S TELEMACHUS—VOLTAIRE'S
HENRIADE—MILTON'S PARADISE
LOST.

HAVING examined the ancient epic poems, we proceed next to Tasso, the first distinguished epic poet of modern times. His *Jerusalem Delivered* is a strictly regular poem of the epic kind, and is adorned with all the beauties that belong to that species of composition. The subject is the recovery of Jerusalem from the infidels, by the united powers of Christendom. The enterprise was splendid, venerable, and heroic; and an interesting contrast is exhibited between the Christians and the Saracens. Religion renders the subject august, and opens a field for sublime description and machinery. The action, too, lies in a country, and at a period of time sufficiently remote, to admit the intermixture of fable with history.

In the conduct of the story, Tasso has shown a rich and fertile invention; which, in a poet, is a capital quality. His events are finely diversified. He never fatigues his reader by sameness or repetition. His scenes have an endless variety; and from camps and battles he frequently transports us to more pleasing objects. The work, at the same time, is artfully connected; and in the midst of variety, the author preserves, perfectly, the unity of his plan.

The poem is enlivened, too, with a variety of characters; and these are all supported with striking propriety. Godfrey, the leader of the enterprise, is prudent, moderate, and brave; Tancred is amorous, generous, and gallant; Rinaldo is passionate and resentful, but full of honor and heroism. Solyman, the tender Erminia, the artful and violent Armida, the masculine Clorinda, are all well drawn and

To whom do we next proceed; and of his *Jerusalem Delivered*, what is remarked? What is the subject of it; and of the enterprise, what is observed? What effect does religion produce; and what is said of the action? In the conduct of the story, what has Tasso shown; what is said of this; and how is this fully illustrated? With what too is the poem enlivened; how are these supported; and what illustrations follow?

animated figures. In the drawing of characters, Tasso is, indeed, remarkably distinguished : he is superior to Virgil ; and yields to no poet but Homer.

He abounds very much with machinery ; and in this part of the work, his merit is more dubious. When celestial beings interfere, Tasso is noble. But devils, enchanters, and conjurers, act too great a part throughout the poem. And, in general, the marvellous is carried to an extravagance, that very much mars the interest of the work. The poet had conceived too great an admiration of the romantic spirit of knight-errantry.

With all the beauties of description, and of poetical style, Tasso remarkably abounds. In describing magnificent objects, his style is firm and majestic. In gay and pleasing description, it is soft and insinuating. Erminia's pastoral retreat in the seventh book, and the arts and beauty of Armida in the fourth book, are exquisitely beautiful. His battles are full of fire, and varied in the incidents. It is chiefly by actions, characters, and descriptions, that he interests us ; for in the sentimental part of his performance he does not excel. He is far inferior to Virgil in tenderness ; and, in general, when he aims at sentiment, he is artificial.

Tasso has often been charged with abounding in point and conceit ; but this is an error : for in his general character he is masculine. The humor of decrying him has passed from the French critics to those of England. But their censures are founded either in ignorance or prejudice ; for the Jerusalem, as a regular epic, ranks next to those of Homer and Virgil. Tasso is eminent for the fertility of his invention, the expression of his characters, the richness of his description, and the beauty of his style.

As the Italians boast of Tasso, so do the Portuguese of Camoens, who was nearly his cotemporary. The subject of the poem of Camoens, is the discovery of the East Indies by Vasco de Gama ; and the enterprise is alike splendid and

In the drawing of characters, how does Tasso compare with Virgil and Homer ? What is said of Tasso's machinery ; when is it noble ; but what remarks follow ? With what does Tasso abound ; and how is this remark illustrated ? What is said of his battles ; by what does he interest us ; and why ? In what is he inferior to Virgil ; and when is he artificial ? With what has Tasso often been charged ; but why is this an error ? What is said of the humor of decrying Tasso ; and what rank does the Jerusalem hold ? For what is Tasso eminent ? Of whom do the Portuguese boast ; and what is the subject of his poem ?

interesting. The adventures, distresses, and actions, of Vasco and his countrymen, are well fancied and described; and the *Lusiad* is conducted on the regular epic plan. The incidents of the poem are magnificent; and if an allowance be made for some wildness and irregularity, there will be found in it much poetic spirit, much fancy, and much bold description. In this poem, however, there is no attempt at painting characters; and the machinery of the *Lusiad* is altogether extravagant. There prevails in it an odd mixture of Christian ideas and Pagan mythology. The Pagan divinities appear to be true deities; and what is strange, Christ and the holy Virgin are made to be subordinate agents. The great purpose, notwithstanding, of the Portuguese expedition, is to extend the empire of Christianity, and to extirpate Mahometanism.

In this religious undertaking, the chief protector of the Portuguese is Venus, and their great adversary is Bacchus. Jupiter is introduced as foretelling the downfall of Mahomet. Vasco, during a storm, implores the aid of Christ and the Virgin; and, in return to his prayer, Venus appears, and discovering the storm to be the work of Bacchus, complains to Jupiter, and procures the winds to be hushed. All this is most preposterous; but towards the end the poet makes an apology for his mythology. His apology, however, is not satisfactory; for his salvo is, that the goddess Thetis informs Vasco, that she and the other heathen divinities, are nothing more than names to describe the operations of Providence.

There is, however, in the *Lusiad*, some fine machinery of a different kind. The appearance of the genius of the River Ganges, in a dream, to Emanuel, King of Portugal, inviting him to discover its secret springs, and acquainting him that he was the destined monarch for whom the treasures of the East were reserved, is a fine idea. But it is in the fifth canto that the poet displays his noblest conception of this sort. Vasco is there recounting the wonders of his navigation. And when the fleet arrived at the Cape of Good Hope, which had never been doubled before by any

What is said of it; and how is this illustrated? In this poem, at what is there no attempt; what prevails in it; and what remarks follow? In this religious undertaking, who protects and who opposes the Portuguese; and how is Jupiter represented? What are all preposterous; what is the poet's apology; and what is observed of it? There is, however, what in the *Lusiad*; and what is a fine idea? But where does the poet display his noblest conception of this sort; and what is it?

navigator, he relates that there appeared to them suddenly, a huge phantom, rising out of the sea in the midst of tempests and thunder, with a head that advanced to the skies, and a countenance the most terrific. This was the genius of that hitherto unknown ocean; and he menaced them in a voice of thunder, not to invade those undisturbed seas, and foretelling the calamities that were to befall them, retired from their view. This is one of the most solemn and striking pieces of machinery ever employed; and is a sufficient evidence that Camoens was a poet of a bold and lofty imagination.

In reviewing the epic poets, it would be unpardonable not to notice the amiable author of the *Adventures of Telemachus*. His work, though not composed in verse, is justly entitled to be considered a poem; and the plan is, in general, well contrived, having epic grandeur, and unity of action. He employs the ancient mythology, and excels in its application. His descriptions are rich and beautiful; especially of the softer and calmer scenes, for which the genius of Fenelon was best suited. He delights in painting the incidents of pastoral life, the pleasures of virtue, and the prosperity and tranquillity of peace.

His first six books are eminently excellent. The adventures of Telemachus, as recounted to Calypso, are the chief beauty of the work. The narration throughout them is lively and interesting. In the books which follow, especially the last twelve, there is less happiness in the execution. The author, in his warlike adventures, is the most unfortunate. The principal objection to this work being classed with epic poems, arises from the minute details of virtuous policy, into which the author in some places enters; and from the discourses and instructions of Mentor, which recur too frequently, and in which there is, doubtless, too much of a common-place morality. To these peculiarities, however, the author was led from the design with which he wrote—that of forming a young prince to the cares and duties of a virtuous monarch.

What was this; what did he do; and what is said of it? In reviewing epic poets, what would be unpardonable; and what is said of his work? What does he employ; and how? What is observed of his descriptions; and in what does he delight? Which books are excellent; and what are the chief beauty of the work? Of the books which follow, what is observed; and where is the author the most unfortunate? What is the principal objection to ranking this work with epic poems; but to these peculiarities, by what was the author led?

Several poets of the epic class, have described a descent into hell; and in the prospects they have given us of the invisible world, we may observe the gradual refinement of men's notions concerning a state of future rewards and punishments. In Homer, the descent of Ulysses into hell, is indistinct and dreary. The scene is in the country of the Cimmerians, who inhabit a region covered with clouds and darkness; and when the dead appear, we hardly know whether Ulysses is above or below ground. The ghosts, too, even of the heroes, appear to be sad and dissatisfied.

In Virgil, the descent into hell discovers greater refinement, and indicates a higher advancement in philosophy. The objects are distinct, awful, and grand. There is a fine discrimination of the separate mansions of the good and the evil spirits. Fenelon has still improved upon Virgil. The visit of Telemachus to the shades, is in a higher style of philosophy. He employs the same fables and the same mythology; but he refines the ancient mythology by his knowledge of the true religion, and that beautiful enthusiasm for which he is so remarkable. His relation of the happiness of the just, is an admirable effort in the mystic strain.

In his *Henriade*, Voltaire has given us a regular epic poem, in French verse. To deny genius to Voltaire would be absurd; and in the present work, accordingly, he discovers, in several places, that boldness of conception, that vivacity, and that liveliness of expression, for which he has been so much distinguished. Several of the comparisons are new and remarkably happy. But, perhaps, the *Henriade* is not the master-piece of this writer. In the tragic line he has certainly been more successful than in the epic. It may be observed, too, that French versification is by no means suited to epic composition. Its want of elevation is against it, as well as its being fettered with rhyme. There is thence not only a feebleness in the *Henriade*, but even a prosaic flatness. The poem, consequently, languishes; and the imagination of the reader is not animated with any of that

What have several of the epic poets attempted to describe; and in the prospects they give us, what may be observed? How is this remark fully illustrated from Homer, from Virgil, and from Fenelon? In his *Henriade*, what has Voltaire given us; and in the present work, what does he discover? What is said of several of the comparisons; and what remark follows? What may also be observed; why; and what consequence follows?

spirit and interest, which ought to be inspired by a sublime and spirited performance of the epic kind.

The subject of the *Henriade* is the triumph of Henry the Fourth over the arms of the League. But the action of the poem includes, properly, only the siege of Paris. It is, in its nature, sufficiently epic; and the poem, in general, is conducted according to the critical rules. But it has great defects. It is founded on civil wars; and it presents to the mind the odious objects of assassinations. The events on which it is founded are of too recent date, and too much within the circle of well known incidents. The author has farther erred, by improperly mixing fiction with truth. For instance, he makes Henry travel into England, and to hold an interview with Queen Elizabeth. Now Henry never saw England, and never conversed with Elizabeth; and such unnatural fables are so wild, that they shock every intelligent reader.

In order to embellish his subject, Voltaire has employed a great deal of machinery; but it is remarkable that his machinery is of the worst kind. It consists of allegorical beings. Discord, cunning, and love, appear as personages, mix with the human actors, and make a considerable figure in the intrigue of the poem. This is contrary to every rule of rational criticism. It is possible to believe in the existence of ghosts, angels, and devils; but it should be considered that allegorical beings are no more than representations of human passions and dispositions; and they ought not to have a place as actors in any poem.

In justice to our author, however, it should be observed, that the machinery of St. Louis, which he also employs, is possessed of real dignity. The prospect of the invisible world, which St. Louis gives to Henry in a dream, is a very fine passage in the *Henriade*. The introduction, by Death, of the souls of the dead, in succession before God, and the palace of the Destinies, are also passages which are striking and magnificent.

Though some of the episodes in this poem are properly

What is the subject of the *Henriade*; but of the action of the poem, what is observed? Though in its nature it is sufficiently epic, yet what are its defects? How has the author farther erred; and what instance is mentioned? What is remarked of the machinery of Voltaire; and how is this illustrated? To what is this contrary; and what remarks follow? In justice to our author, however, what must be observed; and what instances of illustration follow? Of the episodes, the narration, and the strain of sentiment, what is observed; and what remark follows?

extended, yet the narration is altogether too general. At the same time, the events are too much crowded together. The strain of sentiment, however, which pervades the *Henriade*, is noble. Religion appears always with the greatest lustre; and the poem has that spirit of humanity and toleration, which is the constant distinction of men, who rise far above the level of the species.

Milton, of whom we are still to speak, has marked out for himself a new and very extraordinary track in poetry. As soon as we open his *Paradise Lost*, we find ourselves introduced, at once, into an invisible world, and surrounded with celestial and infernal beings. Angels and devils are not the machinery, but the principal actors in the poem; and what in any other composition would be the marvellous, is here only the natural course of events. A subject so remote from the affairs of this world, may leave room to doubt whether *Paradise Lost* can properly be classed among epic poems. But whether it be epic or not, it is certainly a high effort of poetical genius; and in majesty and grandeur, is equal to any performance of ancient or modern times.

How far Milton was happy in the choice of his subject, may be questioned. It certainly led him upon very difficult ground. Had he taken a subject that was more human, and less theological; that was more connected with the occurrences of real life, and afforded a greater display of the characters and passions of men, his poem would, perhaps, have, to the generality of readers, been more pleasing and attractive. His subject, however, was certainly suited, in a peculiar manner, to the daring sublimity of his genius. As he alone, perhaps, was fitted for his subject, so he has shown, in the conduct of it, a stretch both of imagination and invention, which is perfectly wonderful. It is astonishing that, from the few hints given us in the sacred Scriptures, he should have been able to raise so complete and regular a structure, and to fill his poem with such a variety of incidents. No doubt he is, at times, dry and harsh; and too often the metaphysician and the divine. But in the general flow of his narration, he is engaging, elevated, and affect-

What has Milton marked out for himself; and how is this illustrated? Of what may the subject leave room to doubt; but of the work what remark follows? On the choice of Milton's subject, what is observed; and what would have been, to the generality of readers, more interesting? To what, however, was it well suited; and what remark follows? What is matter of astonishment; of the general plan of his narration what is observed; and how is this illustrated?

ing. His objects are changed with art; his scene is now in heaven, and now on earth; and amidst this variety, the unity of his plan is perfectly supported. Still and calm scenes are exhibited in the employments of Adam and Eve when in Paradise; and there are busy scenes, and great actions, in the enterprise of Satan, and the wars of the angels. The amiable innocence of our first parents, and the pride and ambition of Satan, afford a contrast throughout the whole poem, which gives it an uncommon charm.

The nature of the subject did not admit of any great display of characters; but such as could be introduced are supported with much propriety. Satan forms a very striking figure; and Milton has artfully given him a character not altogether void of some good qualities. He is brave; and to his own troops he is faithful. In the midst of his impiety, he is not without remorse. He even feels a sentiment of compassion for our first parents, and appeals to the necessity of his situation, as an apology for his machinations against them. He is actuated by ambition and resentment, rather than pure malice. The characters of Beelzebub, Moloch, and Belial, are well painted. But the good angels, though dignified, have too much uniformity. They have their distinctions, however; and it is impossible not to remark the mild condescension of Raphael, and the tried fidelity of Abdiel. The attempt of the poet to describe God himself, was too bold, and accordingly, it is unsuccessful. Our first parents are finely portrayed. Perhaps Adam is sometimes represented as too knowing and refined for his situation; but Eve is most happily delineated. Her gentleness, modesty, and frailty, mark, very expressively, a female character.

Milton's great and distinguishing excellence is, his sublimity. In this he is far superior to any other poet. But it is to be observed that his sublimity is of a peculiar kind. It differs from that of Homer, which is always accompanied with impetuosity and fire. There is, in Milton's sublimity, a calm and amazing grandeur. Homer warms and hurries

What afford a contrast throughout the whole poem; and what is observed of it? What did not the nature of the subject admit; but what remark follows? How is this fully illustrated in the character of Satan; and what other characters are well painted? What is said of the good angels? Where has Milton failed; why; and what is said of Adam and Eve? What was Milton's distinguishing excellence; and how does he compare with Homer?

us along. By Milton we are fixed in a state of elevation and astonishment. The sublimity of the former is to be found most, most commonly, in his descriptions of actions; that of the latter, in the representation of stupendous and wonderful objects.

But though Milton is most distinguished for his sublimity, yet his work abounds in the beautiful also, and the pleasing, and the tender. When the scene is in Paradise, the imagery is always gay and smiling. His descriptions show an uncommonly fertile imagination; and in his similes he is remarkably happy. His faults—for what writer is without them—are to be found chiefly in his learned allusions, and his introduction of ancient fables.

The language and versification of Milton has high merit. His style is full of majesty, and wonderfully adapted to his subject. His blank verse is harmonious and diversified, and affords an admirable example of that unusual elevation which our language is capable of attaining by the force of numbers. There may, indeed, be found prosaic lines in his poem; but these may easily be pardoned in a long work, where the poetry is, in general, so smooth, so varied, and so flowing.

Besides its sublimity, with what also does his work abound; and how is this illustrated? In what may his faults be chiefly found? Of Milton's language and versification what is remarked; and how is this fully illustrated?

ANALYSIS.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tasso's Jerusalem. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. His invention. B. His characters. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The machinery. b. The descriptions. C. An objection to the poem. 2. Camoens' Lusiad. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. The subject. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The machinery. 3. Fenelon's Telemachus. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Its general character. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li style="padding-left: 40px;">a. The visit to the shades. 4. Voltaire's Henriade. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. The subject. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The machinery. b. The sentiment. 5. Milton's Paradise Lost. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. The subject. B. The characters. C. The sublimity—the tenderness. D. The style and versification. |
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LECTURE XLII.

DRAMATIC POETRY—TRAGEDY.

DRAMATIC poetry has always, among all civilized nations, been a favorite amusement. It is divided into two forms—tragedy and comedy. Tragedy is the most dignified; as great and serious objects are more interesting than trifling and ludicrous ones. The one rests upon the passions, the virtues, the crimes, and the sufferings of mankind; the other, upon their humors, follies, and pleasures. Terror and pity are the great instruments of the former; ridicule, of the latter.

Tragedy is a direct imitation of human manners and actions. It does not exhibit characters by description or narration; it sets the personages before us, and makes them act and speak with propriety. This species of writing, consequently, requires a deep knowledge of the human heart, and when happily executed, it has a commanding power in raising the strongest emotions.

Tragedy, as poetic composition, is, in its general strain and spirit, favorable to virtue. It operates chiefly, by exciting virtuous emotions. Characters of honor, claim our respect and approbation; and to raise indignation, we must paint a person in the odious colors of depravity and vice. Virtuous men are, indeed, often represented by the tragic poet, as unfortunate; for this happens in real life: but he never fails to engage our hearts in their behalf; and, in the end, he always conducts them to triumph and prosperity. Upon the same principle, if bad men are represented as successful, they are yet finally led to punishment. The object of this species of composition should, therefore, always be, to improve our virtuous sensibility. If an author interests

What is remarked of dramatic poetry; and how is it divided? Why is tragedy the most dignified; on what do they respectively rest; and what are their instruments? Of what is tragedy an imitation; what illustration follows; and of this species of writing, what is farther observed? To what is tragedy favorable; how does it operate; and what remarks follow? Why are virtuous men often represented as unfortunate; but what is always done? Upon the same principle, what is remarked of bad men? What, therefore, should always be the object of this species of composition; and when has an author attained all the moral purposes of the tragic muse?

us in behalf of virtue, excites in us compassion for the distressed, inspires us with proper sentiments on beholding the vicissitudes of life, and stimulates us to avoid the misfortunes of others, by exhibiting their errors, he has attained all the moral purposes of the tragic muse.

To effect this purpose, it is necessary to have an interesting story as the subject, and to conduct it in a natural and probable manner. For the end of tragedy is not so much to elevate the imagination, as it is to affect the heart. This principle, which is founded in the clearest reason, excludes from tragedy all machinery, and all fabulous interventions whatever. Ghosts alone, from their foundation in popular belief, have maintained a place in it; but the use even of them, is not to be commended, and they must be managed with great art.

To promote the impression of probability, the story of a tragedy, according to some critics, should never be a pure fiction, but ought to be based on real history. This, however, is certainly carrying the matter too far; for a fictitious tale, if properly conducted, will melt the heart as much as any real history. It is sufficient that nature and probability be not violated; and, therefore, the tragic poet may mingle many fictitious circumstances, with real and well known facts, without the least objection. The great majority of readers never think of separating the historical from the fabulous. They regard, and are affected by those events only, that resemble nature. Accordingly, some of our most affecting tragedies, such as the *Fair Penitent*, and *Douglas*, are entirely fictitious in their subject.

Tragedy was, at its origin, very rude and imperfect. Among the Greeks, it was nothing more than the song that was sung at the festival of Bacchus. These songs were sometimes sung by the whole company, and sometimes by separate bands, answering alternately to each other, and making a chorus. To give this entertainment the greater variety, Thespis, who flourished about 530 years before the Christian æra, introduced, between the songs, a recitation

To effect this purpose, what is necessary; and why? What does this principle exclude from tragedy; and what remark follows? To promote the impression of probability, what opinion has prevailed; but why is this carrying the matter too far? What is sufficient; and, therefore, what follows? Why is this the case; and what is, therefore, said of some of our best tragedies? What was the state of tragedy at its origin; how is this illustrated; and what is said of Thespis and Æschylus.

in verse; and Æschylus, who lived fifty years after him, introduced a dialogue between two persons, or actors, comprehending some interesting story, and placed them upon a stage adorned with scenery. The drama now began to assume a regular form; and was soon after brought to perfection by Sophocles and Euripides.

From this account it appears that the chorus was the foundation of tragedy. But what is remarkable, the dramatic dialogue, which was, at first, only an addition to it, soon became the principal part of the entertainment. The chorus, losing its dignity, came to be considered only an accessory in tragedy. At length, in modern tragedy, it disappeared altogether; and its absence from the stage, in modern times, is the chief distinction between our drama and that of the ancients. With regard to the chorus, it must be allowed, that it added splendor to the drama; and that it was a vehicle for moral lessons, and high poetic efforts. But still it was unnatural, and detracted from the interest of the piece. It removed the representation from the resemblance of real life; and has, consequently, with much propriety, been discontinued.

As in the conduct of the drama, the unities of action, place, and time, are considered capital circumstances, we shall now proceed to treat of them.

The unity of action is, doubtless, of great importance. It refers to the relation which all the incidents introduced bear to some design or effect, so as to combine them, naturally, into one whole. In tragedy, this unity of subject is expressly essential; for a multiplicity of plots, by distracting the attention, prevent the passions from rising to any height. Hence the absurdity of two independent actions in the same play. There may, indeed, be under-plots; but the poet should be careful to make these subservient to the main action. The only object of these is to assist in bringing forward the catastrophe of the play.

What did the drama now begin to assume; and by whom was it perfected? From this account, what appears to have been the foundation of tragedy; but what is remarkable; and how is this illustrated? With regard to the chorus, what must be allowed; and what remark follows? What, in the conduct of the drama, are considered capital circumstances? To what does the unity of action refer; and why is it, in tragedy, essential? Hence what is observed; and of under-plots what is remarked? With what must not the unity of action be confounded; and when is the plot simple?

Unity of action must not, however, be confounded with simplicity of plot. The plot is simple, when but a small number of incidents is introduced into it; and in this, the ancients excelled the moderns. Though the modern introduction of a great number of incidents, may be considered an improvement, as it renders the piece both more instructing and more animated; yet it may be carried too far; for too much action and intrigue, produce perplexity and embarrassment. Of this Congreve's *Mourning Bride* is an example. Its events are too numerous, and too rapidly exhibited; and the catastrophe is intricate and artificial.

But the unity of action, besides being attended to in the general construction of the fable, must be studied in all the acts and scenes of the play. By an arbitrary division, there are five acts in every play. For this, however, there seems to be no necessity. On the Greek stage, the division by acts was unknown. Even the word act does not, in the *Poetics* of Aristotle, once occur. Practice, however, has established this division; and it will, in all probability, continue to be observed.

The first act should contain a clear exposition of the subject. It should introduce the personages to our acquaintance, and excite curiosity. During the second, third, and fourth acts, the plot should advance and thicken. The passions should be kept perpetually awake. There should be no scenes of idle conversation, or vain declamation. The suspense and agitation of the reader should constantly increase. It is in this that Shakspeare surpasses all other authors. Indeed, sentiment and passion, pity and terror, should reign in, and pervade every tragedy.

In the fifth act, which is the seat of the catastrophe, the author should display all his art and genius. The unravelling of the plot should be brought about by natural and probable means. It should be simple, depend on a few events, and include few persons. A passionate sensibility languishes, when divided among a number of objects: it is strong and

Of the course pursued by the ancients and the moderns in this respect, what is observed; and in what play is this illustrated? In what, also, must the unity of action be studied; and on this subject, what is farther remarked? Of the first, and of the second, third, and fourth acts, what is observed; and how is this illustrated? Who excelled in this; and what should pervade every tragedy? What is remarked of the fifth act; and why should the unravelling be simple, and depend on few circumstances?

vehement only when directed to a few. In the catastrophe, every thing should be warm and glowing; and the poet should be simple, serious, and pathetic. English tragic writers have generally inclined to an unhappy close; and this seems in accordance with the spirit of the tragic muse.

Why it is that the emotions of sorrow in tragedy should afford gratification to the mind, is a curious inquiry; and perhaps, the best reason that can be assigned for it is, that by the wise and gracious constitution of our nature, the exercise of all the social passions is attended with pleasure. Nothing is more pleasing than love and friendship; and consequently, whenever we take a deep interest in the concerns of others, an internal satisfaction is produced in our own minds. Pity exerts a powerful influence, and is peculiarly attractive; and though it produces some distress, it, at the same time, includes benevolence and friendship, and partakes of the pleasing nature of those affections. The heart is warmed by kindness and humanity; and we are pleased to find ourselves capable of entering, with becoming sorrow, into the concerns of the afflicted.

Having treated of the acts of a play, we pass to the scenes. The introduction of a new personage, constitutes what is called a new scene. These scenes, or successive conversations, should be closely connected; and to effect this, the poet should, in the first place, constantly keep some personage before us; and in the second place, no person should be introduced or pass from before us, without sufficient reason. If this latter rule be neglected, the nature of dramatic writing is violated; for the drama professes to be a representation of real transactions.

To the unity of action, critics have added the unities of time and place. The unity of place requires that the scene should not be shifted; and the unity of time, that the action continue no longer than would be required for the representation. - Aristotle, however, permits the action to comprehend the whole of the time of one day. The object of

What is farther remarked of the catastrophe; and to what have English tragic writers inclined? Why do the emotions of sorrow in tragedy, afford gratification to the mind; and how is this fully illustrated? Having treated of the acts of a play, to what do we pass; for these what rules are given; and of the latter what is observed? To the unity of action what have critics added; and of them respectively what is remarked? What, therefore, is the object of these rules; and what remarks follow?

these rules, therefore, is to bring the imitation as close as possible to reality. In modern times, too, the practice of suspending the spectacle a short time between the acts, renders the strict confinement to time and place less necessary. Strict adherence, therefore, to these unities, should not be preferred to high beauties of execution, or to the introduction of pathetic scenes.

From dramatic action we proceed to the characters most proper to be introduced in tragedy. Some critics suppose, that the nature of tragedy requires the principal personages to be always of illustrious character, and high rank. They affirm that the sufferings of such persons seize the heart the most forcibly. This, however, is but specious reasoning; for the distresses and agitations of private life, are affecting in the highest degree. Desdemona, and Belvidere, interest as much as though they had been queens. It is sufficient that there be nothing degrading or mean in the personages exhibited. Illustrious rank may give greater splendor to the spectacle; but it is the tale itself, and the art of the poet, that can alone give influence to the piece.

In describing the characters of the persons represented, the poet should be careful so to order the incidents that relate to them, as to leave favorable impressions of the care of Providence, and admiration for virtue. Unmixed characters, either of good or bad men, are, perhaps, not the most suitable for tragedy; for the distresses of the former, being unmerited, injure us, and the afflictions of the latter excite no compassion. Mixed characters, therefore, such as we meet with in the world, are the best field for displaying, without any bad consequences to morals, the vicissitudes of life. They interest the most deeply; and while all their distresses are pathetic, they are the more instructive, when their misfortunes are represented as springing out of their own passions, or as originating in some weakness incident to human nature.

The Greek tragedies are too often founded on mere destiny, and inevitable misfortunes. Modern tragedy aims at a higher object, and shows the direful effects of ambition,

From dramatic action to what do we proceed; and of these what have some writers supposed? Why is this but specious reasoning; and of this, what remarks follow? In describing characters, what course should the poet pursue; and of unmixed characters, what is observed? What characters, therefore, are the best; and why? On what are the Greek tragedies too often founded; but what is observed of the modern?

jealousy, love, resentment, and every strong emotion. But of all the passions which have occupied the modern drama, love has had the greatest triumph. In ancient tragedies love is scarcely known; and this, perhaps, is to be attributed to the circumstance, that females took no part in their representations. It is evident, however, that no solid reason can be assigned for the predominancy of love among modern tragic writers; and Home, in his Douglas, has afforded sufficient proof, that the drama may produce its highest effects, without any assistance from love.

Besides the arrangement of his subject, and the conduct of his personages, the tragic poet must attend to the propriety of his sentiments. These must correspond with the persons who are represented, and with the situations in which they are placed. This direction is so obvious, that it does not require to be insisted upon; and it is chiefly in the pathetic parts, that the difficulty of following it is to be found.

Dramatic writers have generally been least successful in their attempts at exciting passion. A man under high passion, makes known his feelings in the glowing language of sensibility. He does not coolly describe what his feelings are; yet it is to this sort of description that tragic poets have recourse, when they are unable to attain the native language of passion. Thus, in Addison's Cato, when Lucia having confessed to Portius her love for him, swears that she will never marry him; Portius, instead of giving way to the language of grief, only describes his feelings:

Fix'd in astonishment, I gaze upon thee,
Like one just blasted by a stroke from Heaven,
Who pants for breath, and stiffens yet alive
In dreadful look; a monument of wrath.

These lines might have proceeded from a bystander, but are altogether improper from Portius. Similar to this descriptive language, are the unnatural and forced thoughts which tragic poets sometimes employ to exaggerate the feelings of persons whom they wish to describe under high agitation. Thus, when Jane Shore, in meeting with her husband in her distress, and on finding that he had forgiven her, calls on the

What passion most occupies the modern drama; and what is remarked of this? Besides the arrangement of his subject, to what must the tragic poet attend; with what must these correspond; and of this direction, what is observed? Where have dramatic writers generally been least successful; what remarks follow; and from Addison's Cato how is this illustrated? Similar to this descriptive language are what; and what illustrations follow?

rains to give her their drops, that she may possess a constant supply of tears, the poet strains his fancy to say something that shall be uncommonly lively.

The language of real passion is always plain and simple. It abounds, indeed, with figures; but these express a disturbed and impetuous state of mind, and are not for mere parade and embellishment. The thoughts suggested by passion are natural and obvious, and not exaggerations of resentment, subtlety, and wit. Passion neither reasons, nor speculates, nor declaims: the language is short, broken, and interrupted. In this the Greek tragedians excel: and this, too, is the great excellence of Shakspeare.

With regard to moral sentiments and reflections, they ought not to recur too frequently in tragedy. When unseasonably used, they lose their effect, and convey an air of pedantry. When introduced with propriety, however, they have great dignity. Cardinal Wolsey's soliloquy on his fall, is a fine instance of the felicity with which they may be employed.

The style and versification of tragedy, should be free, easy, and varied. English blank verse is peculiarly suited to this species of composition. It is capable of great majesty, and may yet descend to the familiar; it admits of a happy variety of cadence, and is free from the monotony of rhyme. Of the French tragedies, it is a great misfortune that they are always in rhyme; for it fetters the freedom of the tragic dialogue, renders it languid, and is fatal to the power of passion.

What is observed of the language of real passion; and of passion what is farther remarked? With regard to moral sentiments and reflections, what is observed; and of their proper introduction, what instance is given? What should the style and versification of tragedies be; and what advantage have the English over the French in this respect?

ANALYSIS.

Dramatic poetry.

I. Tragedy.

- A. Favorable to virtue.
- B. The subject.
- C. Its origin.
 - a. The chorus.
- D. Unity of action.
 - a. Simplicity of plot.

- b. Unity of the acts.
- c. Tragedy gratifying.
- d. The scenes.
 - Unity of time and place.
- a. The characters.
- b. Love in modern tragedy.
- c. The sentiments.
- d. The style and versification.

LECTURE XLIII.

GREEK TRAGEDY—FRENCH TRAGEDY— ENGLISH TRAGEDY.

HAVING treated of all the different parts of tragedy, we shall now proceed to take a short view of that of Greece, of France, and of England ; remarking, as we pass, on the different distinguished writers of each country.

We have already observed, that in the Greek tragedy there was much simplicity. The plot was natural and unencumbered ; the incidents were few ; and the conduct, with respect to the unities of action, time, and place, very exact. Machinery, or the intervention of the gods, was employed ; and what was preposterous also, the final unravelling was sometimes made to turn upon it. Love, except in one or two instances, was never admitted into the Greek tragedy. Their subjects were often founded on destiny or inevitable misfortunes. A vein of religious and moral sentiment always runs through them, but they made less use than the moderns do, of the combat of the passions, and of the distresses which they bring upon us. Their plots were all taken from the ancient traditional stories of their own nation. Hercules furnishes matter for two tragedies. The history of *Cædipus*, king of Thebes, and his unfortunate family, for six. And the war of Troy, with its circumstances, for no fewer than seventeen.

Æschylus, who is the father of Greek tragedy, exhibits both the beauties and defects of an early original writer. He is bold, nervous, and animated, but very obscure and difficult to be understood. The ardor of his mind hurried him frequently into extravagance and bombast, and rendered that indistinct which a greater degree of attention, and a

Having treated of all the different parts of tragedy, to what shall we now proceed ; and what do ? What have we already observed ; and how is this illustrated ? What was employed ; and what is observed of it ? What was never admitted ; on what were their subjects often founded ; and what remark follows ? From what were their plots all taken ; and how is this remark illustrated ? What does *Æschylus* exhibit ; and what is farther remarked of him ? Into what did the ardor of his mind frequently hurry him ; and what followed ?

more refined taste, would have made elegant and perspicuous. The moral sentiments which he has inculcated, spring rather from a view of the evils of life, and the calamities of the human race, than from a just knowledge of the mixed state of human affairs. To support them with firm courage, and determined resolution, was the great maxim he labored to establish. The guilty he alarms with the terrors of divine vengeance, and the unfortunate he teaches to submit to his calamity as arising from a destiny which must be fulfilled. The ghost of Darius in the *Persæ*, the inspiration of Cassandra in *Agamemnon*, and the songs of the Furies in the *Eumenides*, are, however, very beautiful, and strongly expressive of the author's genius.

Sophocles is the greatest of the three Greek tragedians. In the conduct of his subjects, and in the sublimity of his sentiments, he far surpasses either *Æschylus* or *Euripides*. He is eminent for his descriptive talent also. The relation of the death of *Œdipus*, in his *Œdipus Coloneus*, and of the death of *Hæmon* and *Antigone*, in his *Antigone*, are perfect examples of description in tragic poets. The style of Sophocles is remarkable for dignity and beauty, approaching even to the magnificence of the epic. It is always pure, perspicuous, and harmonious. He never anticipates the subject and issue of his plots, but evolves every incident in a gradual and natural manner, and keeps the mind in a state of suspense till the final catastrophe.

Euripides surpasses Sophocles in tenderness and moral sentiments; but in the conduct of his plays, he is more incorrect and negligent. His expositions are made in a less artful manner; and the songs of his chorusses, though remarkably poetical, have, generally, less connection with the main action than those of Sophocles. The style of *Euripides* is simple, elegant, and not much elevated above the language of genteel conversation. It is admirably adapted for expressing the various passions and emotions of the mind, particularly those of the tender and amiable kind; in ex-

From what do his moral sentiments spring; and what was the great maxim which he labored to establish? What remark follows; and what are beautiful and strongly expressive of the author's genius? What is said of Sophocles; in what does he excel; and what illustration is given of his descriptive talent? What is observed of his style; and what remark follows? How does *Euripides* compare with Sophocles? What is said of his style; and to what is it admirably adapted?

citing which he far surpassed his predecessors. *Æschylus* represented men greater than they can possibly be; *Sophocles*, as they ought to be; and *Euripides*, as they actually are. *Euripides* knew more of the effect of the passions than either of the former; and hence there is more of the tender and pathetic in his tragedies, than in those of his predecessors. While they, by their representations, raise the mind above the weakness of nature, or the vicissitudes of fortune, he subdues and unmans it, by pictures of distress and excess of feeling. On this account, *Aristotle* styles him the most tragic of all poets.

The circumstances of theatrical representation among the Greeks and Romans, were, in several respects, very singular, and widely different from that of modern times. Not only were the songs of the chorus accompanied with instrumental music, but the dialogue part had also a modulation of its own, and was capable of being set to notes. It has also been thought that, on some occasions, the pronouncing and gesticulating parts were divided, and performed by different persons. In tragedy, the actors wore a long robe, called *syрма*, which flowed upon the stage. They were also raised upon cothurni, which rendered their stature uncommonly high; and they always used masks. These masks were painted; and the actors, by turning the different profiles, exhibited different emotions to the audience—a contrivance which, certainly, must have been very imperfect. In the dramatic spectacles, notwithstanding, of both Greece and Rome, the attention given to their exhibition and magnificence, far exceeded any thing that has been attempted in modern times.

In the composition of some of the French dramatic writers, particularly *Corneille*, *Racine*, and *Voltaire*, tragedy has appeared with much lustre and dignity. They must be allowed to have improved upon the ancients, in introducing more incidents, a greater variety of passions, a fuller display of characters, and in rendering the subject thereby more interesting. They have studied to imitate the ancient models

How did *Æschylus* and *Sophocles* respectively represent men; in what had *Euripides* the advantage; and hence what followed? How is this illustrated; and what says *Aristotle* of him? Of the circumstances of dramatic representation among the Greeks and Romans, what is remarked; and how is this fully illustrated? Still, of their dramatic spectacles what is observed? What is said of the compositions of some of the French dramatic writers, and in what have they improved upon the ancients? In what have they studied to imitate the ancients; and what remarks follow?

in regularity of conduct. They are attentive to all the unities, and to all the decorums of sentiment and morality; and their style is generally very poetical and elegant. What an English taste is most apt to censure in them, is the want of fervor, strength, and the natural language of passion. There is often too much conversation in their pieces; they are too declamatory, when they should be passionate—too refined, when they should be simple. Voltaire freely acknowledged these defects in French tragedy. He admits that their best pieces do not make a sufficient impression on the heart, and that the authors seemed afraid of being too tragic. He, therefore, gave it as his judgment, that a union of the vehemence and the action that characterize the English drama, with the correctness and decorum of the French, would be necessary to form a perfect play.

Corneille, who is properly the father of French tragedy, is distinguished by the majesty and grandeur of his sentiments, and the fruitfulness of his imagination. His genius was, unquestionably very rich, but seemed more turned towards the epic than the tragic vein; for in general he is magnificent and splendid, rather than tender and touching. It must be remembered, however, that it seems to have been Corneille's object to set forth the human character as it should be, and not as it really is; and to this circumstance, that which may seem unnatural in his tragedies, is to be attributed. He composed a great number of pieces, the most esteemed of which are, the *Cid*, *Horace*, and *Cinna*.

Racine, as a tragic poet, is much superior to Corneille. He wanted the copiousness and grandeur of Corneille's imagination; but is free from his bombast, and excels him greatly in tenderness. His *Phædra*, his *Andromaque*, his *Athalie*, and his *Mithridate*, are admirable performances, and do no small honor to the French drama. His language and versification are uncommonly beautiful. Of all the French authors, he appears to have most excelled in poetical style; to have managed their rhyme with the greatest advantage and facility, and to have given it the most complete harmony.

What is English taste most apt to censure in them; and of this, what is observed? What does Voltaire admit; and what does he, therefore, give as his judgment? What is said of Corneille; and what is observed of his genius? Of him what must be remembered; and what are his best pieces? How does Racine compare with Corneille; and what do no small honor to the French drama? What is said of his language and versification; and what remarks follow?

Voltaire repeatedly pronounced Racine's *Athalie* to be the finest drama in the French language. It is altogether a sacred piece, and owes much of its elevation to the majesty of religion; but it is less tender and interesting than *Andromaque*.

Voltaire, in several of his tragedies, is inferior to neither of his great predecessors. In an important article he has outdone them both—in the delicate and interesting situations he has contrived to introduce. Here lies his chief strength. He is not, indeed, exempt from the defects of the other French tragedians, of wanting force, and of being sometimes too long and declamatory in his speeches; but his characters are drawn with spirit, his events are striking, and in his sentiments there is much elevation. His *Zayre*, *Alzire*, *Méropé*, and *Orphan of China*, are four admirable tragedies, and deserve the highest praise. What seems very remarkable is, that Voltaire, though a professed infidel, should, in the strain of his sentiments, be the most religious, and the most moral, of all the French tragic poets.

We have still to speak of the state of tragedy in Great Britain; the general character of which is, that it is more animated and passionate than French tragedy, but less regular and correct, and less attentive to decorum and to elegance. The pathetic, it must constantly be remembered, is the soul of tragedy. The English, therefore, must be allowed to have aimed at the highest species of excellence; though in the execution, they have not always joined the other beauties that ought to accompany the pathetic.

The first object that presents itself to us among the English dramatists, is the great Shakspeare. Great he may be justly called, as the extent and force of his natural genius, both for tragedy and comedy, are altogether unrivalled. But at the same time it must be acknowledged, that his genius is sometimes wild, that his taste is not always correct, and that he was too little assisted by knowledge and art. Long has he been idolized by the British nation; much

What said Voltaire of his *Athalie*; and what follows? How does Voltaire compare with his predecessors? From what is he not exempt; but what excellencies follow? Which of his tragedies deserve the highest praise; and what is a very remarkable circumstance? Of what have we still to speak; and how does it compare with the French? What must constantly be remembered; and what, therefore, follows? Among the English dramatists, who first presents himself; and why may he be called great? What must, at the same time, be acknowledged; and what remarks follow?

has been said and much written concerning him ; criticism has been lavished with the utmost prodigality upon his words and witticisms ; and yet it is undecided, whether his beauties or his faults predominate. Admirable scenes and passages without number, there are in his plays—passages beyond what are to be found in any other dramatic writer ; but there is hardly any one of his plays, which can be read with uninterrupted pleasure throughout. Besides extreme irregularities in conduct, and grotesque mixtures of the serious and the comic in one piece, we are often interrupted by unnatural thoughts, harsh expressions, a certain obscure bombast, and a play upon words, which he is fond of pursuing ; and these interruptions to our pleasure too frequently occur, on occasions where we would least wish to meet with them. All these faults, however, Shakspeare redeems, by two of the greatest excellences which any tragic poet can possess—his lively and diversified paintings of character, and his strong and natural expression of passion. These are his two chief virtues—on these his merit rests. Notwithstanding his many absurdities, all the while we are reading his plays, we find ourselves in the midst of our fellows ; we meet with men—vulgar, perhaps, in their manners, coarse and harsh in their sentiments—but still they are men ; they speak with human voices, and are actuated by human passions ; we are interested in what they say and do, because we feel that they are of the same nature with ourselves. It is, therefore, no matter of wonder, that from the more polished and regular, but more cold and artificial performances of other poets, the public should return with pleasure to such warm and genuine representations of human nature.

Shakspeare possesses likewise the merit of having created, for himself, a sort of world of preternatural beings. His witches, ghosts, fairies, and spirits of all kinds, are described with such circumstances of awful and mysterious solemnity, and speak a language so peculiar to themselves, as strongly to affect the imagination. His masterpieces, and those in which all the strength of his genius appears, are *King Lear*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, and *Macbeth*. With regard to his histo-

What are there in his plays ; but what defects do they contain ? By what, however, does Shakspeare redeem all these faults ; and what remarks follow ? What is, therefore, no matter of wonder ? What merit does Shakspeare likewise possess ; and how is this illustrated ? What are his masterpieces ; and what is observed of his historical plays ?

rical plays, they are neither tragedies nor comedies; but a species of dramatic entertainment, in which he describes the personages, the events, and the manners of the times of which he treats.

After the age of Shakspeare, we can produce, in the English language, several detached tragedies of considerable merit. But we have not many dramatic writers whose whole works are entitled, either to particular criticism, or very high praise. In the tragedies of Dryden and Lee, there is much fire, but a great deal of fustian and rant. Lee's *Theodosius* is the best of his pieces, and though romantic in the plan, and extravagant in the sentiments, does not want tenderness and warmth. Otway possessed much tragic spirit; and his two principal pieces, '*The Orphan*,' and '*Venice Preserved*,' are powerful productions. These may, perhaps, be considered too tragic; the distresses being so great as to harrow the feelings, and overwhelm the mind. Though he possessed much genius, and strong passion, he is exceedingly gross and indelicate. No tragedies are less moral than those of Otway.

The tragedies of Rowe form a striking contrast to those of Otway. He is full of elevated and moral sentiments. The poetry is often good, and the language always pure and elegant; but in most of his plays he is too cold and uninteresting; and flowery rather than tragic. Two of his plays, however, deserve to be exempted from this censure—'*Jane Shore*,' and the '*Fair Penitent*,'—in both of which there are so many tender and truly pathetic scenes, as to render them justly favorites of the public.

In the *Revenge of Dr. Young*, there are both fire and genius; but it is deficient in tenderness, and exhibits too strong a conflict of direful passions. In Congreve's *Mourning Bride*, are some fine situations, and much good poetry. The meeting of *Almeria* with her husband *Osmyn*, in the tomb of *Adselmo*, is one of the most solemn and striking situations to be found in any tragedy. The tragedies of *Mr. Thomson* are so full of stiff morality, that it renders

What is remarked of English dramatic writers after the age of Shakspeare? What is remarked of the tragedies of Lee and of Dryden; and of Lee's *Theodosius* what is observed? What is remarked of Otway; and how is this illustrated? What is said of the tragedies of Rowe; and what remarks follow? What two may be exempted from this censure; and what is remarked of them? What is said of the *Revenge of Dr. Young*, and of the *Mourning Bride of Congreve*; and of the latter what illustration follows?

them dull and formal. Mr. Addison's *Cato*, and Mr. Home's *Douglas*, are both admirable productions.

In reviewing the tragic compositions of different nations, we find that a Greek tragedy is the relation of some distressful or melancholy incidents; without much variety of parts or events, but naturally and beautifully set before us; heightened by the poetry of the chorus. A French tragedy is a series of artful and refined conversations, founded upon a variety of tragical and interesting situations; carried on with little action or vehemence; but with much poetical beauty, and high propriety and decorum. An English tragedy is the combat of strong passions, set before us in all their violence—producing deep disaster—often irregularly conducted—abounding in action; and filling the spectators with grief. The ancient tragedies were more natural and simple; the modern are more artful and complex. Among the French, there is more correctness; among the English, more fire. *Andromaque* and *Zayre*, soften; *Othello* and *Venice Preserved*, rend the heart.

Of the tragedies of Mr. Thomson, the *Cato* of Addison, and *Douglas* of Home, what is remarked? In reviewing tragic compositions, what do we find a Greek tragedy, a French tragedy, and an English tragedy, to be? How do the French and the English compare; and what illustration follows?

ANALYSIS.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. Greek tragedy.
 A. <i>Æschylus</i>.
 B. <i>Sophocles</i>.
 C. <i>Euripides</i>.
 a. Manner of representation.</p> | <p>C. <i>Voltaire</i>.
 3. English tragedy.
 A. <i>Shakspeare</i>.
 a. His preternatural beings.
 B. <i>Dryden—Lee—Otway</i>.
 C. <i>Rowe—Young—Thomson</i>.</p> |
| <p>2. French tragedy.
 A. <i>Corneille</i>.
 B. <i>Racine</i>.</p> | <p>4. The conclusion.</p> |

LECTURE XLIV.

COMEDY—ANCIENT COMEDY—MODERN COMEDY.

COMEDY is sufficiently distinguished from tragedy, by its general spirit and strain. While pity and terror, and the other strong passions, forms the province of the latter, the chief instrument of the former is ridicule. Follies and vices, and whatever in the human character is the object of censure, or excites in the beholder a sense of impropriety, are subjects for the comic muse.

This general idea of comedy, as a satirical exhibition of the improprieties and follies of mankind, is an idea very moral and useful. To polish the manners of men, to promote attention to the proper decorums of social conduct, and above all to render vice ridiculous, are highly commendable. There are many vices that are more successfully exploded by ridicule than by serious arguments. It is possible, however, to employ ridicule improperly; and, by its operation, to do mischief instead of good. Ridicule is far from being a proper test of truth; and licentious writers of the comic sort, may cast a ridicule on objects which do not deserve it. But this fault is not attributable to comedy itself, but to the turn and genius of the writers of it. In the hands of an immoral author, comedy may mislead and corrupt; but in those of well intentioned writers, it is a pleasant entertainment, and may lead to reformation, and the advancement of virtue.

The rules of dramatic action, prescribed to tragedy, belong also to comedy. The comic writer also, must observe the unities of action, time, and place. As the scope of all these rules is to bring the imitation as near as possible to probability, perhaps a stricter observance of them is more

By what is comedy sufficiently distinguished from tragedy? What form the province of the latter; what is the chief instrument of the former; and what are subjects for the comic muse? What is said of the general idea of comedy; and what are highly commendable? What remark follows; but what is, however, possible? Of what is ridicule not the test; and what follows? But to what is this fault attributable; and what illustration follows? What rules of dramatic action belong equally to tragedy and comedy; what remark follows; and why?

necessary in comedy than in tragedy; for the subjects of comedy are more familiar, and better known.

The subjects of tragedy are not confined to any particular age or country; but it is otherwise with comedy: for the decorums of behavior, and the nice discriminations of character which are the objects of comedy, are to be understood by the natives of the country only, where the author resides. We may weep for the heroes of Greece and Rome, but we can be touched with the ridicule of the manners and characters that come under our own observation only. The scene, therefore, of comedy, should always be laid in the author's own country, and in his own age. The comic poet should 'catch the manners living as they rise.' It is not his business to amuse us with a tale of the last age, or with a Spanish or a French intrigue, but to give us pictures taken from among ourselves; to satirize reigning and present vices; to exhibit to the age a faithful copy of itself, with its humors, its follies, and its extravagancies.

There are two kinds of comedy—that of character, and that of intrigue. In the latter, the plot of the play is the principal object. In the former, the display of some peculiar character is chiefly aimed at; and to this the whole action is made subordinate. The French abound most in comedies of character. All Moliere's capital pieces, such as his *Avare*, his *Misanthrope*, and his *Tartuffe*, are of this sort. The English, however, abound most in comedies of intrigue. In the plays of Congreve, and, in general, in all our comedies, there is much more story and action than there is with the French.

The perfection of comedy would, perhaps, be found in the mixture of these two kinds of entertainment together. Without some interesting story, mere conversation is apt to become insipid. There should always be so much intrigue as to give us something to wish, and something to fear. The incidents should be striking and natural; and should afford a full field for the exhibition of character. The piece, however, should not be overcharged with intrigue; for this would be converting a comedy into a novel.

Of the subjects of tragedy what is remarked; but why is it otherwise with comedy? How is this remark illustrated; and of the scene, therefore, what is observed? What is not, and what is, the comic poets business? What two kinds of comedy are there; and what is observed of them respectively? In which do the French, and in which the English abound; and what illustrations follow? Where would the perfection of comedy be found; and how is this fully illustrated?

With respect to characters, it is a common error of comic writers, to carry them much beyond real life; and, indeed, it is very difficult to determine where wit ends, and buffoonery begins. When the miser, for instance, in Plautus, searching the person whom he suspects of having stolen his casket, after examining first his right hand, and then his left, cries out, 'show me your third hand,' every one must be sensible of the extravagance. Certain degrees of exaggeration are allowed to the comedian; but there are limits set to it by nature and good taste, which he must not pass.

Characters, in comedy, ought to be clearly distinguished from one another; but the artificial contrasting of characters, and the introducing of them, always impairs, give too affected an air to the piece. In every sort of composition the perfection of art is to conceal art. A masterly writer will, therefore, give us his characters, distinguished rather by such shades of diversity as are commonly found in society, than marked with such strange oppositions, as are readily brought into actual contrast in any of the circumstances of life.

As to the style of comedy, it ought to be elegant, lively, and pure; and should generally imitate the tone of polite conversation. French writers have generally written their comedies in rhyme; but this is not suitable to comic composition, for poetry has no connection with the conversations of men in common life. One of the most difficult circumstances in writing comedy, is to maintain throughout a current of easy, genteel, unaffected dialogue, without pertness and flippancy, or dullness and formality.

These are the chief observations that occur concerning the general principles of this species of dramatic writing, as distinguished from tragedy. We next proceed to a short history of its progress, and the manner in which it has been carried on by authors of different nations.

The comedy of the ancients was an avowed satire against particular persons, who were brought upon the stage by name.

With respect to characters, what is a common error; what is very difficult; and what illustration follows? How should characters in comedy be distinguished; but what gives too affected an air to the piece? As, in every sort of composition, the perfection of art is to conceal art, what follows? What should the style of comedy be? In what have the French generally written their comedies; what is observed of it; and what is a very difficult task? After these general observations, to what do we proceed? What was the comedy of the ancients; what are examples; and what is said of them?

Such were the plays of Aristophanes; and compositions of so singular a nature illustrate well the turbulent licentiousness of Athens. The most illustrious personages were then exposed to the unrestrained scope of the comic muse. Vivacity, satire, and buffoonery, are the characteristics of Aristophanes. Though he possessed much strength and genius, yet his performances do not afford a very high idea of the Attic taste of wit in his age. His ridicule is extravagant; his wit is farcical; his personal raillery is biting and cruel; and his obscenity is intolerable.

Soon after the days of Aristophanes, the liberty previously indulged by comic poets, of attacking persons by name, was prohibited by law. To this the middle order of comedy succeeded; in which living characters were still assailed, but under fictitious names. Of these comic pieces we have no remains. To them succeeded the new comedy; when the representations became what they now are—pictures of manners and characters, but not of particular persons. The author, the most celebrated of this kind, among the Greeks, was Menander; but his writings have perished.

Of the new comedy of the ancients, the only examples that now exist, are the plays of Plautus and Terence. The first is eminent for the *vis comica*, and for an expressive phraseology. He bears, however, many marks of the rudeness of the dramatic art in his time. He abounds too much with low wit; and is by far too quaint, and too full of conceit. He possesses, however, both force and vivacity; and his characters, though somewhat coarse, are well marked.

Terence is polished, delicate, and elegant. Nothing can be more pure and graceful than his language. Decency and correctness reign in his dialogues; and his relations have a picturesque and beautiful simplicity. His morality, too, is unexceptionable. The situations which he introduces are often tender and interesting; and many of his sentiments touch the heart. He may be considered the founder of serious comedy. In his characters and plots, there is a sameness and uniformity; and in sprightliness and strength he is also deficient.

What were the characteristics of Aristophanes; and what is further observed of him? What was, soon after the day of Aristophanes, prohibited by law; to it what succeeded; and what is observed of them? To them, what succeeded; and in it who was the most celebrated writer? Of the new comedy, whose plays are the only remains; and of the first, what is observed? What are the qualities of Terence; and of him, what is farther remarked?

Among the moderns, the Spaniards have been remarkable for their comic dramatic productions. Lopez de Vega, Guillin, and Calderon, are the principal Spanish comic writers. The first, who is by far the most famous of them, wrote not less than a thousand plays; and was infinitely more irregular than even Shakspeare. He disregarded, altogether, every rule of dramatic composition. In one play he frequently includes whole years; and his scenes are often, in the same act, in Spain, in Africa, and in Italy. His dramas are chiefly historical; and are a mixture of heroic speeches, serious incidents, war, ridicule, and buffoonery. He jumbles together christianity, paganism, virtues, vices, angels, and gods. Notwithstanding his faults, however, he possessed both genius, and imagination. Many of his characters are well drawn, and his situations are generally happy; and from the products of his rich invention, dramatic writers of other countries have derived many advantages.

French comedies are uniformly allowed to be correct, chaste, and decent. France has produced several writers of considerable merit, such as Regnard, Dufresny, Dancourt, and Marivaux; but the comic writer in whom the French glory most, is the famous Moliere. Voltaire pronounces him the most eminent comic poet of any age or country; and perhaps this decision is not merely the result of partiality. Moliere is the satirist of vice and folly only. He has selected a great variety of characters peculiar to the times in which he lived; and he has generally placed the ridicule justly. He is full of mirth and pleasantry; and his pleasantry is always innocent. His *Misanthrope* and *Tartuffe* are a kind of dignified comedy, in verse; and in them vice is exposed in the style of elegant and polite satire. In his prose comedies, though there is abundance of ridicule, yet there is nothing to offend a modest ear, or to throw contempt upon virtue.

Together with these high qualities, Moliere has his defects also. The unravelling of his plots is by no means happy.

Among the moderns, what is observed of the Spaniards; and who are their principal writers of comedy? What is said of the first, and how is this illustrated? Notwithstanding his faults, what did he possess; and what illustrations follow? What are French comedies allowed to be? What comic writers of merit has France produced; but in whom do they glory most? What says Voltaire of him; and of what is he always the satirist? Illustrative of his excellences, what is farther remarked? Together with these high qualities, what defects has Moliere; and of verse comedies, and more risible pieces, what is observed?

This is frequently brought about with too little preparation, and in an improbable manner. Perhaps his attention to the full exhibition of characters, lessened his care for the conduct of the intrigue. In his worse comedies, he is not always sufficiently interesting; and his speeches frequently run into prolixity. In his more risible pieces in prose he is often too farcical. But, upon the whole, it may be affirmed, that few writers ever attained so perfectly the true end of comedy, as Moliere. His *Tartuffe*, in the style of grave comedy, and his *Avare*, in the gay, are accounted his two capital productions.

In English comedy we are naturally led to expect a greater variety of original characters, and bolder strokes of wit and humor, than are to be found elsewhere, among the moderns: Humor is, in a great measure, the peculiar province of the English nation. The freedom of the government, and the unrestrained manners of the people, tend to produce singularity. In France, the influence of a despotic court has spread uniformity over the nation. Comedy, accordingly, flows more freely in England than in France. But it is to be deeply regretted, that the comic spirit of Britain has been too often disgraced by indecency and licentiousness.

The first age of English comedy was not, however, infected by this spirit. Neither the plays of Shakspeare, nor those of Ben Jonson, can be accused of immoral tendency. Shakspeare's general character appears to as great advantage in his comedies as in his tragedies—a strong, fertile, and creative genius, irregular in conduct, but singularly rich and happy in the description of characters and manners. Jonson is more regular in the conduct of his pieces, but stiff and pedantic; though not destitute of dramatic genius. In the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, much fancy appears, and many fine passages may be found; but in general, they abound with romantic incidents, with unnatural characters, and with coarse allusions.

But, upon the whole, what conclusion may be drawn; and what are his best pieces? In English comedy, what are we led to expect; and why? How is England contrasted with France; but what is, at the same time, to be deeply regretted? Of the first age of English comedy, what is observed; and of Shakspeare, and Jonson, what is remarked? In the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, what may be found; but with what do they abound? After the restoration, what seized upon comedy as its peculiar province; and how is this illustrated?

After the restoration of Charles II., the licentiousness that infested the court seized upon comedy as its peculiar province. It was then that the rake first became the hero of every play. The ridicule was thrown, not upon vice and folly, but much more commonly upon chastity and sobriety. It is true, in the end of the piece, he becomes, in some degree, reformed; but throughout the performance, he is set up as the model of a fine gentleman; and the agreeable impression made by a sort of sprightly licentiousness, is left upon the imagination, as a picture of the pleasurable enjoyment of life; while the reformation passes lightly away, as a matter of mere form. To what sort of moral conduct such public entertainments tend to form the youth of both sexes, may be easily imagined.

Dryden was the first considerable dramatic writer after the restoration. In his comedies there are many strokes of genius; but he is frequently hasty and careless. As his object was to please, he followed the current of the times, and was uniformly corrupt and licentious. His want of decency was, at times, so gross, as to occasion the prohibition of his pieces.

After Dryden, flourished Cibber, Vanbrugh, Farquhar, and Congreve. Cibber possesses sprightliness, and a pert vivacity; but is forced and unnatural in his incidents. His performances have all sunk into obscurity, excepting 'The Careless Husband,' and 'The Provoked Husband.' Of these, the first is remarkable for the easy politeness of the dialogue; and it is tolerably moral in its conduct. The latter, in which Cibber was assisted by Vanbrugh, is, perhaps, the best comedy in the English language. Its characters are natural, and it abounds with fine painting, and happy strokes of humor.

Wit, spirit, and ease, characterize Sir John Vanbrugh; but he is the most indelicate and immoral of all the English comedians. Congreve is, unquestionably, a writer of genius. He is witty and sparkling; and full of character and action. Indeed he may be said to overflow with wit. It is often introduced without propriety; and, in general, it is too pointed and apparent for well bred conversation. Farquhar is a

Though in the end of the piece he becomes, in some degree, reformed; yet, what remarks follow? What is said of the comedies of Dryden; and to what extent did he carry his want of delicacy? Who flourished after Dryden; and of Cibber and his performances, what is observed? What characterize Vanbrugh; but what remark follows? What is said of Congreve, and of Farquhar?

light and gay writer; less correct than Congreve, and less brilliant; but more easy, and nearer to real life. The two least exceptionable of his plays are, 'The Recruiting Officer,' and 'The Beaux Stratagem.' But though the least exceptionable, yet the uniform tendency of the plays of both Congreve and Farquhar, is so manifestly immoral, that of the former Lord Kames, with much force, observed, 'If the comedies of Congreve did not rack him with remorse, in his last moments, he must have been lost to all sense of virtue.'

Of late years, a reformation has gradually taken place in English comedy. Our writers of comedy now seem ashamed of the indecency of their predecessors. If they have not the spirit, ease, and wit, of Congreve and Farquhar, they have much more important qualities; for they are both innocent and moral.

For this improvement we are indebted to the French comic writers. The introduction there of a graver comedy, attracted the attention, and met the approbation of English writers. From this graver comedy wit and ridicule are not excluded; but it seeks to merit praise by tender and interesting situations. It is sentimental, and touches the heart. It pleases not so much by the laughter it excites, as by the tears of affection which it draws forth. It is not, however, to be supposed, that this new species of comedy is to supersede, altogether, the comedy that is founded in ridicule. There are materials for both; and the drama is the richer for the innovation. At least, it may be considered as a mark of true politeness and refinement of manners, that theatrical exhibitions have become fashionable, which are free from indelicate sentiment, and an immoral tendency.

Of the latter, which are the two least exceptionable pieces; but what remark follows; and what says Lord Kames? Of late years, what improvement has gradually taken place in comedy; and to whom are we indebted for it? From this graver comedy, what are not excluded; and what follows? What, however, is not to be supposed; and what remarks follow?

ANALYSIS.

Comedy.

1. The nature of comedy.
2. Rules concerning it.
3. The subject.
 - A. A perfect comedy.
4. The characters.
5. The style.
6. Ancient comedy.

- A. Aristophanes.
- B. Plautus—Terence.
- Spanish comedy.
8. French comedy.
9. English comedy.
 - A. Its character.
 - B. The principal comic writers.
10. An improvement in comedy.

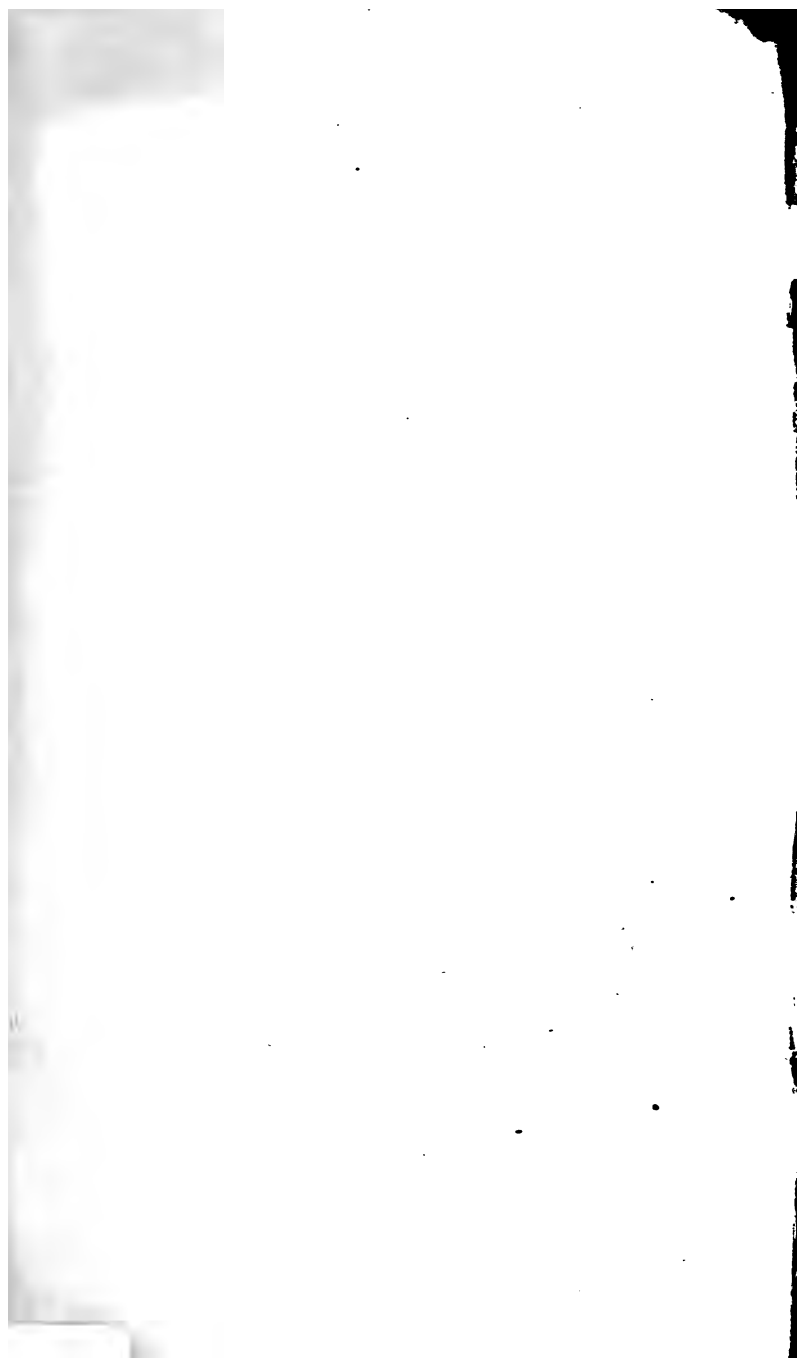


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